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April 1st

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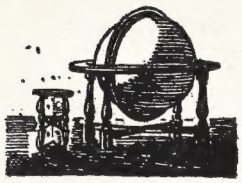

Adventure

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Arthur Sullivant Hoffman
EDITOR

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Decorations by ROCKWELL KENT

**Occasionally one of our stories will be called an "Off-the-Trail" story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of magazines, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved.*

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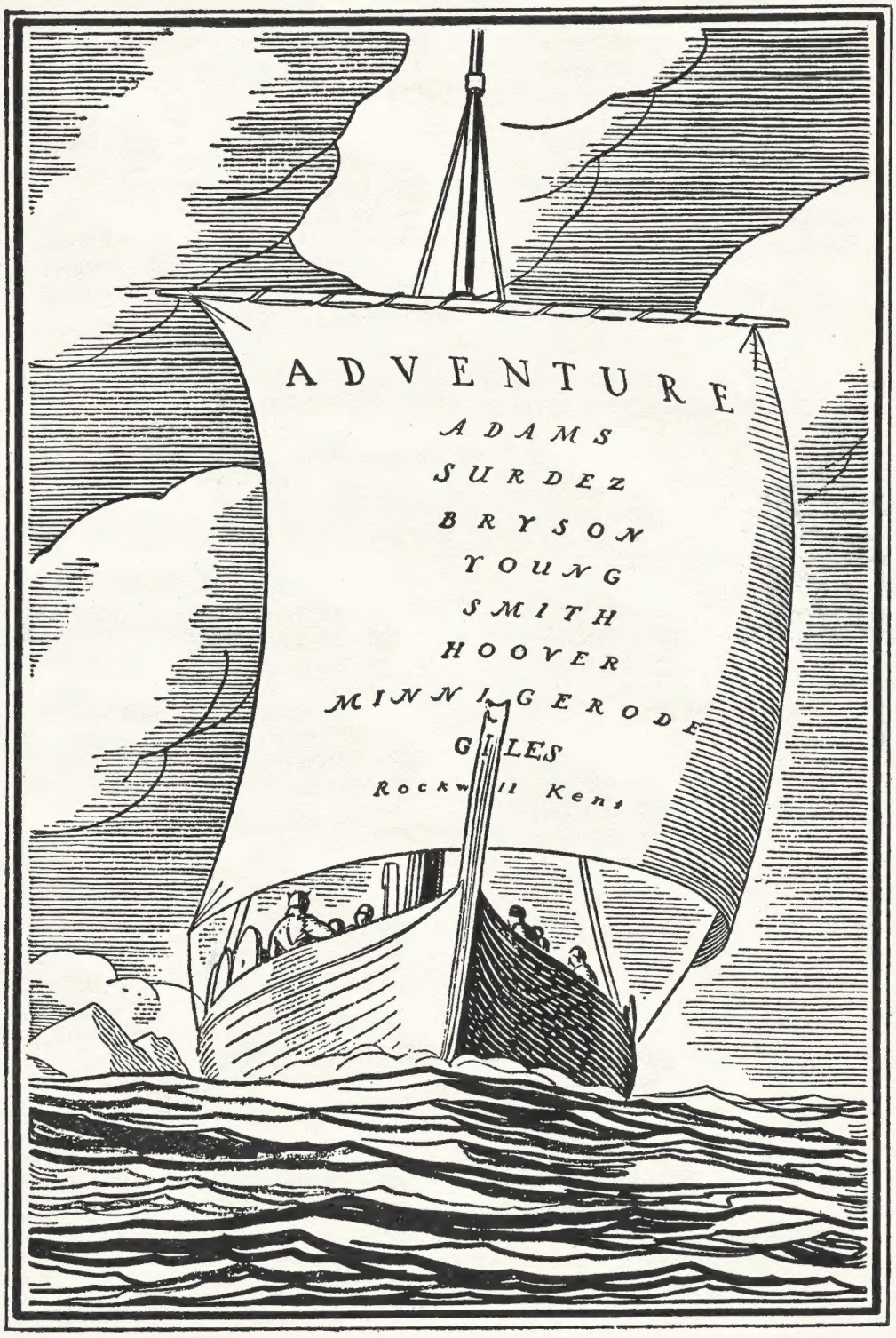
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SERGEANT SHEEHAN AND THE MARNE PATROL

The Friend of his Youth

IT WAS early twilight of a summer night, that period after sunset when there seems to be plenty of light, yet corners become dark, and mysterious shadows appear under trees and behind houses. There was a long tree-lined street, a street that was also a road, once a main trunk-line between Metz and Paris but now only a stretch of bare ground; for this part of France belonged to Germany, in whose possession it had been for a month or more. Houses lined this street, their windows shuttered, their once well-kept gardens already a tangle of weeds. One side of the street was screened with curtains of burlap hung between the houses and across the streets that came in at right angles. That side of the street was toward a river, and beyond the river, on heights still lighted by the sun, the enemy had his positions and lay in wait to fire on any one walking on the street. In spite of this, or perhaps because they relied on the concealment of the burlap curtains, numbers of men were walking under the trees, slinking along in the shadows, sometimes in couples, sometimes alone—men in the olive drab of the American Army, helmeted, armed with bayoneted rifles and wearing gas masks in the alert position.

The street under the trees grew darker and darker. As the night fell guns began to growl and rumble among the hills and stray machine-guns along the river bank clattered sharply at intervals. A man on the street who had been wandering aimlessly up and down crossed hurriedly to the far side, and called to two more approaching from the opposite direction.

"Hey," called the first man, "where's the P. C. around here?"

The other two men put down their burden, a marmite can slung on a pole, and looked about them hastily for a place of refuge.

"Shshsh!" they said huskily, "don't yell like that! The Boche'll hear you."

"Never mind the Boche!" snapped the first man. "I've been wandering around

A COMPLETE NOVELETTE

By

LEONARD H. NASON

here for an hour trying to find the P. C. of F company and I'm sick of it! Where are you taking that chow to?"

"What regiment was you lookin' for F company of?" asked one of the men.

"The Third Infantry."

"Umm. Well, I don't know where it is. We ain't doughboys—we're Signal Corps."

"Well, you must know where the command posts are here," protested the first speaker. "If you don't know where F company is, show me just one other—any one will do. Anywhere that I can get hold of a telephone."

Here one of the men who had been carrying the marmite nudged his companion, and it seemed as if he whispered in the other's ear. The two at once picked up their burden and made as if to depart.

"Oh, don't be such —— fools!" cried the man who was searching for the P.C. "I'm Lieutenant Sewell from F company. Do I look like a Boche spy? Can't a man ask for a little information without every one acting the fool? If I have you men tried, you'll find out who I am!" The two with the marmite were already on their way. "Halt! halt!" cried the lieutenant again. "Who's in command of your outfit?"

"Marshal Foch!" called back one over his shoulder.

There were protests now from the shadows and mysterious voices said huskily:

"Cut out that —— hollerin'! You'll draw fire."

"I'll Marshal Foch you!" muttered Lieutenant Sewell.

He started to pursue the marmite carriers, but another man appeared from behind a garden gate. This man was large and bulky, with a slung rifle on which the bayonet gleamed in the darkness.

"Here you," said the lieutenant turning, "are you with the Third Infantry?"

"Nope," said the big man, "you got me wrong. I'm with the British. They're all British in this sector."

The lieutenant seemed to pray. At that moment, however, a voice spoke from the ground.

"Who's doing all that yelling out there?" demanded this voice. "Do you suppose it's our shavey? Ask him if his name is Sewell, sentry."

"Yes, it is," cried the lieutenant joyfully.

"Well, come down!" said the mysterious voice. "Don't stand out there yelling your head off all night." The voice grew fainter as if the speaker had moved away from a window; it was still perfectly audible however. "That's the class of officer we're getting already," went on the voice. "They have to have a general order and blue print before they will believe there's a war on. Stand there and hoot and yell with the Boche not a hundred yards away." The voice grew fainter yet. "Fool," was audible, "Throw away lives— Slug through his tail." Then silence.

"How do you get down?" asked the lieutenant in an embarrassed voice.

"Stairs," said the sentry gruffly. "Folly the path an' you'll see 'em. Pile o' sandbags around 'em."

He turned his back and the officer, fumbling with his feet for the path, went through a grilled iron gate, along a narrow path and when he came to a pile of sandbags, gray in the dusk, he felt about with one foot until he found a stair and so went down into the cellar of the house.

The cellar was like the pictures Lieutenant Sewell had seen of tombs. It was

of whitewashed brick, cold and damp. Mysterious arched passages went off into the darkness and at the end of one of these a tiny spark of light glowed. The lieutenant went toward this, feeling his way with hands and feet. He found, at the end of the passage, that the light came from behind a curtain, shining through a chink between it and the wall. The officer lifted the curtain aside. There was an arched room there, a table, several candles stuck in bottles and the dim figure of a man.

"That you, Lieutenant?" asked the man. "Come in. My name is Walton. I'm in command here. Been looking for you all afternoon."

The lieutenant went in and shook hands. The other man he saw wore a captain's insignia on the uniform of an enlisted man.

"How did you come up?" continued the captain, "a truck?"

"Yes, sir," replied Lieutenant Sewell. "Has my bedding roll put in an appearance?"

"Bedding roll?" repeated the captain. He seemed to choke. "Nope, no bedding roll yet. Well, don't worry. It'll appear. I suppose you gave it to a couple of privates to carry? Well, I thought so. Hope springs eternal in the human breast. We'll hope you'll see it again. All a man can do about anything now is hope. Been in France long?"

"Yes, sir, seven or eight months. I've been at St. Aignan all the time though, until a week ago. This is my first time in the front."

"So?" said the captain. "Well, now, I never would have known it. When I heard you out in the street I certainly thought you were an old veteran. Huh! Never ask anything of a buck private, Lieutenant. He doesn't know and if he does he won't tell. There are orders out anyway to be careful about strange officers asking for information. We aren't very far from the enemy here. They come and go as they please, too. And keep your voice low when you're in the street. Voices carry far in this valley and you're liable to get a lead plug in your whistle."

"What do you mean they come and go as they please, sir?" asked the lieutenant.

"Oh, they have patrols over here most every night, sometimes in their own uniforms, sometimes in ours. We hear of 'em from gas guards, and kitchen drivers tell about meeting 'em on the roads. Every once in a while some mysterious officer will drop into a P. C. and ask to use the phone to call his outfit. He'll call for some code name that no one ever heard of and then he'll say his outfit has moved and he wants to call the Steenth Machine-Gun or the Umpth Artillery or the Fourth Anti-Aircraft Group, and what's their code name? The boys are only too eager to help, so they tell him the code name of every P. C. in the sector."

"Why don't they stop it?" asked the lieutenant.

"They would if they could."

"But how do they get across the river?"

"Well, that's the question," said the captain. "They can swim or they can come in boats. Which do they do? Hardly swimming. Too much noise, and then a man gets all wet. It's hard to carry arms. No, sir, they don't swim. The current in the Marne is very swift. They get in boats 'way up river and drift down. Then when they want to land they do so, make their patrol, get into the boat again and drift down river where their gun crews are looking for them, and land on their own side again."

"I should think that would be easy enough to stop," remarked the lieutenant as the captain paused to light a cigaret.

"We're going to try it tonight," said the captain, blowing smoke. "We have figured out about where they start and we're going to do a little pat-rolling on our own hook."

"Gee," said the lieutenant, "that ought to be interesting. I hope I can be around to hear the report of the patrol."

Again the captain blew smoke and watched it mount and spread along the arched roof of the cellar.

"You don't know the half of it," he

grunted. "You're going with the patrol."

The lieutenant looked at the smoke himself. It was sweeping along the roof and disappearing. There was a window under the arch, closed by a sheet of corrugated iron, under which the smoke was disappearing. The lieutenant shivered just a bit from the chill of the cellar. To go on patrol— Something clanked against the iron that shuttered the window, the iron swung inward as if hinged and a low voice called—

"You there, Captain Walton?"

"Yup," said the captain, "come on down." He turned to Lieutenant Sewell. "That's probably our friend from the Intelligence. He's going with you on patrol alone. This scout officer is quite a bird. Speaks German and all that, but he's unpopular as they make 'em. Knows too much and says so. I hear he tells the major how to run the battalion. By the way, I might as well have in the sergeant to hear what this is all about."

The captain rose and, pulling aside the curtain, called—

"Sergeant Sheehan!"

The call was taken up and repeated so that the cellar rang.

"Good evening, Lieutenant," said the captain. "Come in. We're all ready for you."

He held aside the curtain and another officer appeared, a well set up man wearing a beautifully cut uniform from which the rank and other insignia had been removed. If this was the scout officer, Sewell could see why he was unpopular. He had a thin dark face, with deep-set eyes, and the impression he made at first sight was disagreeable in the extreme.

"Lieutenant Lipp," said the captain, "meet Lieutenant Sewell. You'll know each other better before the night's out. Lieutenant Sewell's going on the patrol. Just joined, but might as well do a little work. You may not get another chance for a month, Lieutenant, especially to go with an instructor like Lipp. They say he knows more about the German lines than Von Hindenburg himself.

"And you'll have a good sergeant. Sheehan is quite a character, but he's had a lot of front line experience. He broke up a Boche raid single-handed last winter, up near Verdun somewhere, and just lately he captured some highfalutin officer of the German General Staff. We got him from the Second. If you don't learn how to patrol from these two, you never will."

The captain paused to puff at his cigar and Lieutenant Sewell felt his feet grow a little warmer. He had had a vision of himself, as ignorant as a newborn babe, leading a patrol through mazes of trenches and wire and what-not to an unpleasant death. But if this other lieutenant was to go, that would be different. Then there would be a sergeant along. They were the life-savers, those sergeants. Sheehan! A fine old redheaded, freckled-faced veteran of the Islands and the Mexican Expeditionary Force probably. Just the kind to take a poor raw shavetail under his wing and make an officer of him!

A head projected into the room, the rest of the owner's body concealed by the curtain.

"Did you call for me, Captain?" asked the head. "Because if you didn't, I got something I should be doing."

"Come in, Sergeant," said the captain coldly. "This is Lieutenant Sewell, who has just joined, and Lieutenant Lipp, who's going on your patrol tonight. I've brought you in to listen to the instructions. Are the men ready?"

"Yes, Captain."

The owner of the head entered the room, and Lieutenant Sewell moved to have a better look at him. The lieutenant was disturbed. The sergeant was undersized, his bearing was anything but that of a veteran, and it seemed to the lieutenant that the last word the sergeant had spoken had been pronounced "Keptin."

Once the sergeant's profile was in the candlelight the lieutenant was certain. The facial angle, the shape of the nose and the curly hair that escaped from under the too large helmet proclaimed

that the sergeant belonged to a race which, though not without honor, is more celebrated for its commercial abilities than for its prowess in battle.

"Listen, now," began the captain. "The patrol will be from gun position H4 in front of Thierry to the fork of the Marne below here. You can find that gun position easily. Go down along the west wall of that big brick house that sets back from the road, cross the bridge over the railroad and you'll see the gun position, or you could if it were light. Anyway, Lieutenant Lipp knows where it is, and they'll have a man looking for you. The orders I received were to issue extra grenades for use in demolition of boats, and to have the men carry trench knives and pistols, with the exception of two men who are to carry rifles and rifle grenades. What's the rifle grenades for, Lieutenant Lipp—to throw across the river if anything starts?"

"I bet you can't give it a guess who I am," said a voice.

All jumped. Sergeant Sheehan had moved around the table so that he stood before Lieutenant Lipp, and as all looked on horrorstricken, he removed his helmet and they could see him grin. Sewell began to think of shell shock and of stories he had heard of soldiers that went suddenly mad and fired their pistols in all directions.

"My name ain't Sheehan," went on the grinning sergeant, "it's Wladichesnikov, an' yours ain't Lipp, neither. It's Lipovitchsky. Remember when we lived in Weehawken? You an' me was in School Number Nine together. I took it the name Sheehan because it was easy to say, and so if any one called me Sheeny, it wouldn't hurt my feelings. But they all called me Jew Sheehan. A man what's got it a name like Irishers, you wouldn't think they would call him Jew, would you? Do they say it to you, Jew Lipp?"

"Never mind this," interrupted the captain hastily. "This is business, Sergeant. We'll talk about that later. Are the men ready? Ten men? Are they all equipped? Have you looked 'em over?"

"Sure, Captain. Right after supper we was ready."

"Well, you'd better go look them over," suggested the captain. "Be sure they've all got ammunition or that none of them have wandered away or anything."

"Oh, that's all right, Captain," said Sheehan brightly, "they're all every one right behind that curtain."

"Behind that curtain?" gasped the captain.

"That's it," replied Sheehan. "We was shootin' it a little game dice-craps and when you called to me I picked up all the money. Sergeants are the ones that look after the money. So they all come with me so I shouldn't get lost in the cellar."

"Well, go on back and finish your game," ordered the captain. "Just see that the men don't get away."

"I would like to stay," said Sheehan. "I don't meet a fellar what I went to school with so often I should run away and shoot dice-craps the minute I seen him."

The sergeant gazed fondly at Lieutenant Lipp, who sat in darkness beyond the table.

"I remember you," went on the sergeant. "Don't be bashful I would tell any one what your real name is. When a man's in a outfit full of *goys* he's got to be careful what a name he has. Max, I used to call you. Sure, you remember me. My name is Yoma, after my uncle what come from the old country."

"I think the man's mad!" remarked Lieutenant Lipp coldly. "Can't we have another sergeant detailed? I'm not enthusiastic about crawling around in front of the enemy with a lunatic."

"Why, it's a little late now," said the captain in a conciliating tone. "The other sergeants are on duty and we couldn't get one without a lot of trouble, and then Sergeant Sheehan here is an old campaigner while the others aren't. That'll be all, Sergeant. Have the men fall in in the garden for inspection. That'll be all now. The officers can give

you your instructions later. Yes, that's all. Hurry, now."

Sheehan hesitated a minute, then turned and lifted the curtain.

"I got to go now, Max," said he over his shoulder. "I'll see you later. We can talk it together old times on the way. You should tell me how your father gets along in the overall business. Maybe I would like to go into that myself. Piece goods what I'm in now—"

The captain here arose and taking Sheehan by the arm, propelled him gently from the room. He went out, there was a sound of whispering, then feet tiptoed along the passage and could be heard clattering up the stairs.

"A good slap in the jaw is what the man needs!" muttered Lipp. "Drunkenness is the big thing we have to contend with in this sector. I'm not going to take him. I won't have a drunken man on a patrol with me."

"He's not drunk," said the captain. "That's just his way. I'm not a Regular officer, though I'm with Regular troops; I'm just a civilian that's in the war to do what he can to help. It's all right to be hard-boiled with professional soldiers, but most of these boys are civilians just like I am, used to civilian ways.

"What we're here for is to win the war and not make parade ground soldiers out of a lot of clerks and farmers. Teach 'em to shoot and teach 'em to stick a bayonet and that's enough. Heel-clicking and snapping out of it are all right in peace time, but we haven't got time for it now. Sheehan has been a fighter and has a fine record, and if he doesn't want to address me in the third person, he doesn't have to. Now, then, about this patrol—"

"Sure I know him!" said a voice beyond the corrugated shutter. "Didn't I go to school with him? So soon I see his big nose I knew him. Comes his sister Ida with him by the hand every morning to the school, and before she let go of him she would wipe it on her apron."

"Let me read you the order," said the captain hastily, and the three officers became intently interested in the typewritten sheet he held in his hand.

Lieutenant Sewell tried to pay attention to what the captain was reading, but his mind wandered. There was a thrill and a romance in this being actually at war, actually at the front, really and truly in the presence of death! How many men, his friends, men and officers that he had met at home or in France, would give their entire worldly possessions to be where he was, in that dim candle-lit cellar!

The sound came down from beyond the shutter, of feet tramping in the street, of faint gunfire down river and at times, when the wind was right, the growl of guns from up the valley. The captain read in a subdued voice, his face shadowed by his helmet. Cigaret and cigar smoke curled and then spread across the ceiling in long undulating layers. The intelligence officer made pencil marks on a crackling map. The captain was reading a report that enemy construction was going on in such a locality, that the forward sentry posts at Jaulgonne reported the sound of hammering on metal, that a certain trench had been widened and lengthened and now extended to the ruins of the bridge at Fossoy.

"Now here's what we're after. Listen to this," cried the captain.

> *"Enemy patrols have been reported as far behind our forward positions as the factory buildings at Crezancy. It is possible that these are our own or Allied patrols, reported by error as enemy groups. In order to obtain definite information on this point, organization commanders will only send out patrols on orders from these headquarters and will arrest and hold for identification all troops found in their subsectors other than their own organizations.*

"There. That shows the Boche are coming over. Isn't that a bright order! There's ten million French, signal corps, searchlight sections, ambulance drivers,

machine-gunners, artillery men, gendarmes, balloon groups, military police and what-not that pass up and down that street and through my back garden every hour of the twenty-four. How can I arrest 'em?"

"It's time we were going," said Lieutenant Lipp. "You won't mind if you never see that lunatic sergeant of yours again, will you? I feel that something is liable to happen to him tonight."

"You aren't going across the river, are you?" asked the captain. "There's a trench along the railroad track on this side. I mean there's not a great chance of any one's getting hurt, is there? Because if there is, I don't want to send a green officer out to get himself a hero's grave."

"This patrol is for gathering information," said Lieutenant Lipp. "If the squareheads are coming over, we might run into them. Otherwise our orders are to just take a look-see. Well, good night, Captain. I'll drop in sometime about daylight."

"No, but my instructions were very plain that this patrol was not to go across the Marne."

"Well, don't worry, Captain, I understand the instructions," said Lipp coldly. "I won't take them over."

All then shook hands and the two lieutenants went down the passage and up the stairs into the garden.

"Now then," said Lipp, "there's just one more thing. When do you rank from? Mine is from Oct. 4, 1917."

"Well, you rank me," said Sewell. "I wasn't made until just before I left St. Aignan. I haven't drawn my first lieutenant's pay yet."

"Well, it wouldn't make any difference," said Lipp, "because I'm in command of the patrol, but I always like to ask out of politeness."

There was a sneer under these words that Sewell started to resent, then changed his mind. After all, what difference did it make? No one had heard. They crossed the yard to where a dark mass marked the group of men who awaited them. Lieutenant Lipp gave them a long look.

"How many men have been on patrol before?" he asked.

No one answered.

"Speak up, don't be afraid to say so if you're all green at it. But I want to know it beforehand and not find it out in front of a German machine-gun."

"Nope," spoke a voice that Sewell recognized instantly as Sheehan's, "they ain't been on patrol, none of them. They know how they should crawl on their belly and say 'shshsh,' but that's all. Comes a fellar from this outfit back from a patrol with no holes in his pants and he got enough. Once is too many times to go on patrol. I been on one once last winter. Oy! Patrols is it? If I wasn't a sergeant, I wouldn't be on this one. And the captain said it to me we wouldn't be in no danger also."

"Thank you for your comments, Sergeant," said Lipp bruskly. "We'll be very grateful if you keep them to yourself, however."

He then went on, to the great admiration of Lieutenant Sewell, to explain in detail to each member of the patrol just what the purpose of the patrol was, the position of the said man in the formation and what was to be done in case of encounter with the enemy.

"This is more of a training maneuver than a real patrol," concluded Lipp, turning to Sewell, "but it's well to have them all understand what's going on. I explain carefully to each man the purpose of the patrol and the standing orders, and then I'm sure he understands. Patrolling is serious business. One man can get you all killed. Sergeant, step this way a minute."

The gravel crunched, and the undersized form of Sheehan appeared.

"You'll take the rear of the formation, Sergeant," said Lipp in his official voice. "Watch for straggling and cigaret smoking. Keep them closed up."

"Max," said Sheehan, "consider it done. What I could do to them fellars you couldn't do better yourself."

The officer choked. Sewell heard a swift movement and a sound as if some one had seized some one else. Then Lipp's voice, cold and murderous.

"—— your cheap soul, this comedy has gone far enough! You may be able to get away with it in front of your captain, but not with me! You're under arrest and I'll have those stripes off your arm this time tomorrow night. Now get out of my sight! Your interest in this patrol ceases right here! Dirty kike!"

Sewell moved discreetly away. He had been in the Army long enough to know that when anything starts between officer and enlisted man that is likely to have serious echoes, the wise man goes away. Then he can say at a later time with a clear conscience that he neither heard nor saw.

"Come on," called Lieutenant Lipp a minute or two later, "we'll be off. Have you ever been on patrol, Lieutenant? Where is that officer? Lieutenant Sewell!"

"Here," answered the other. "No, this is my first time out."

"Oh yes, I forgot," answered Lipp. "The captain explained, but it had slipped my mind. Well, there's nothing to it, except not to get rattled. Don't lose your head. If you think you're being fired at, *stop!* Don't move for a long time, even if the gun isn't firing any more. It's dark and the Boche can't see and they fire blindly. Chances are they'll decide they didn't hear a noise after all. Well, we'll be going. If you feel frightened at any time, just watch me."

The patrol went out of the garden and down the dark street under the elms. The shadows seemed to be alive, and yet to the eye nothing moved. Voices murmured; the rasp and click of pick and shovel came from the river side, where a trench was probably in course of construction; a machine-gun clattered loudly, the sounds of its explosions echoed and magnified by the house walls behind it. Again Sewell felt the thrill that comes to a man who has longed for battle and finds himself at last on the firing line.

The patrol crossed a long open space where burlap curtains masked the stars and the view of the road from across the river, but one could see under the curtain, and a dazzling, ghastly light kept gleaming through it. Rocket flares! And the hands that fired them were German. Up they went, leaving a long glowing trail—*plop!*

The shuttered windows of the houses would stare, and the lieutenant, peeking under the curtain, could see a stretch of fields, tiny houses and a far-away row of trees that must mark a road. He felt a little chill at that. Germans walked along that distant road, enemies alert to kill those who might walk on the road he and the patrol now trod.

"Halt!" softly commanded Lieutenant Lipp.

The command was passed back and the patrol halted. They stood there, an uneasy group, their breath whistling and their equipment rustling from the rapid rising and falling of their chests.

"We'll be under observation from now on," continued Lipp. "We're going down this lane to the river bank where there is a tow path. There's quite a wide stretch from the railroad track here to the bank that's covered only by machine-guns, and that's where the Germans are coming in.

"There'll be nobody out there tonight but ourselves, so that any one you hear outside this patrol is a Boche. But I don't want any one to shoot or to throw a grenade even if a scrap starts without my order. Let the Boche throw grenades and yell and holler all they want to. It's dark, they can't see us, they don't know how many we are and they'll be frightened to death of us. Leave 'em alone. The minute you start shooting back you give away your location and show them how many you are. Don't do it. Corporal Dibello here? Take the rear, Corporal, and keep the men closed up. The sergeant has been sent back."

"Do you do this sort of thing often?" whispered Sewell, as the patrol went softly down the lane in the shadow of the houses.

"Quite," answered Lipp. "I'm regimental scout officer. I take a patrol and some dumb officer from each company every night and just crawl around. It's for training mostly, although there's just enough danger in it to make it interesting. And then the Boche are coming through here too regularly. I've got to stop that. The brigade commander was on the carpet for it this morning and he passed down what he got through the regiments.

"If we can't stop patrols filtering through, what will we do when a drive starts? The company commanders are at fault, you see. I've pointed out to several of them just how they could arrange things better, but they didn't seem to be able to grasp my point."

They came to the tow path then and Lipp explained that the patrol would stay down on the American side of it, with one man on the bank and one man on the path. The tow path was raised, as most paths are, a yard or so above the level of the fields behind. This would shelter the patrol and the man on the path could observe and signal down to the patrol if he saw the enemy.

"Now then, Sewell," said the other officer, "I'm going along the path with the man there. We'll change frequently. Don't let anything start, above all things. You won't be able to control the men very much, but do the best you can."

"Excuse me, sir," whispered Sewell. "I don't know anything about this game, I know, but haven't you neglected to tell where the patrol will assemble in case of dispersion?"

"No. I never do that. If you designate a rallying point like that, chances are that the minute a row begins, nine of your ten men will scuttle for the rallying point. No, they must have only one thought in mind, that their safety lies with me and their job is to stick right around where I know where they are, and not go off rallying just when I need them the most. Well, here we go."

They went away then, crawling cautiously a few yards, then halting at Lipp's signal, while he and the man on the tow path took a look. It was hot down there in the grass. Sewell's muscles were cramped, his legs ached and he bruised his hands on the sharp pebbles. When they stopped he tried to listen, but the machine-gun fire from the American side of the river was thrown back and redoubled from the house walls in the town, as from a great sounding board. There were short pauses, a silence at intervals that was profound, during which he could hear far back in the hills the sound of wheels rattling, and once the chugging of trucks climbing a steep grade. He knew just where that grade was, the last hill before coming into Château Thierry, on the main road coming from Montmirail. What a long way off that was, yet how clearly the sound carried! For just a heartbeat or two the lieutenant wished he were there, and not on this river bank with death only a few yards away.

"Lootenant!" breathed a voice in his ear. "Lootenant! The other lootenant wants yuh to come up on the path wit' him."

"All right!" whispered Sewell, and climbed the bank to the tow path.

"Keep down!" whispered somebody. "Good God, keep your head out of the stars! The Boche aren't twenty yards away! Stay flat! Stay flat! I want you here with me, you'll learn more. Come on, now. Easy. Lift your body and legs up to move—don't drag yourself along. Watch me if you can!"

Sssssssssss! A long hiss, and a light dazzled Sewell as if a searchlight had been turned into his eyes. No need to tell him to lie still. He lay there, much as he had seen rabbits cowering under a bush, their hearts beating so that their whole body vibrated. The Germans would see them, a thousand guns would fire and three dead bodies would be found on the tow path the next morning. The light hung in air a long, long time and Sewell, looking under his arm, could see the wide fields overgrown with rank grass, the distant trees that lined the highroad looking as if they had been cut out of paper, and in the middle distance a toy railroad, the

severed telegraph wires hanging from the posts like untidy hanks of hair. The light went out as if some one had pushed a button.

They had not been seen.

The patrol went on, Lipp leading, and Sewell and the other man behind him on the path; then, over the bank, connected by a man who crawled there, were the balance of the men. Inch by inch they progressed along the hard surface of the path that had been pounded into cement-like smoothness by generations of heavy-footed tow-horses.

Lights went up and the patrol lay still; stray guns bayed, the distant hills rumbled and growled, yet withal there were moments of intense silence when a man could hear the cold river hurrying past, whimpering and whispering among the rushes, and the quick breathing of the men on the far side of the bank.

Sewell, moving forward, suddenly felt flesh under his hand and at the same instant somebody seized his arm. He stopped.

"Lie down!" said Lipp's voice in his ear, hardly more than a breath, but still audible.

They lay there for what seemed an age. Sewell's back ached, his legs began to itch, and turn and twist as he might he could could not allay their tingling. A hand tugged at his blouse and, following its urging, he rolled over once or twice and so down into the shelter of the bank.

"I think we're on the trail," whispered Lipp again. "Did you notice anything queer about the flares?"

"No, I can't say that I did."

"Well, you're here for instruction. Go up on the path again and watch them."

Sewell went back again, a little resentful at the other's tone, but this was war and they were at the front and a man could not mince his words. He lay there, cheek to the ground, watching. A flare soared and burst. It went out after a while and then another followed it. It took four of them before Sewell saw what the scout officer had meant. The first flares the patrol had encountered had been fired either from the far bank of the Marne or from its close vicinity, but these last flares were going up from some distance inland, so that their light did not shine either on the river or south bank. Good. He could see that. He went down the bank again and reported his discovery to the scout officer.

"Does that mean anything to you?" asked Lipp.

"Why, no. Unless the Boche have a particular area around there that they would rather illuminate than the river."

"Have you noticed any lights from the American side?"

"Why, no. I've been too busy watching the Germans."

"A patrol officer," said Lipp, "must watch everything. He must have eyes in the back of his head and one on each knuckle. The Americans aren't throwing any flares because the chances are that one of them might display us to an alert sniper or machine-gunner on the other bank. And at this particular part of the river the Boche aren't throwing any for the same reason. They've either got a patrol on its way down here or there's one over here now. That's why I've been sitting here talking to you. Maybe you thought it was for my amusement, but it wasn't. Now then, we know what we're going to do; the patrol formation will change. Pull the men in here where I can talk to them."

They got the men in, in a close circle.

"Men, the formation from now on will be changed. We'll have two parties, one on the river bank itself and the other in the field. The ground changes soon and the tow-path isn't raised any longer, so keep your heads down.

"Now we'll crawl, guiding on me. After we've crawled a ways we stop, and then every man feel around until he gets hold of his neighbor's hand. That'll keep you in line and give some idea of where your next man is. Now one squeeze of the hand means by the right flank, and two squeezes means by the left flank. Now, when we've changed to either flank we'll be in a column, but if a

man feels either one of his legs shoved hard, that will mean to form line in the direction of the leg that was shoved, right or left as I direct. That clear?"

Evidently it was, for no one asked any questions.

"All right," went on Lipp. "Lieutenant Sewell and I will be on the river bank, one man between us and the tow-path, four men on the path, and the balance in the field. If any one sees anything or thinks he does, let him pass the word down to me by whispering in his neighbor's ear. Under no circumstances is there to be any shooting or any grenade throwing. This is the worst place on the river to have anything begin because the enemy are under the cover of their own guns across the river and they'd be tickled to death to fire into the middle of the whole lot of us. Very good. Now then, Sewell."

Over the two officers went, and the slow progress along the river began again. Sewell was bored, and Lipp's cold, sneering tone was beginning to irritate him. The excitement of the thing had worn off and he wished he were home in bed.

There were thick rushes now along the bank, the tow-path had flattened out so that it was on a level with the field, yet higher than the edge of the river, which gave those on the river edge an unpleasant feeling of being too much exposed to enemy fire. Sewell's hand slid over a bunch of rushes, plunged into water up to the wrist, then as he quickly tried to shift it to solid ground, it struck a rope.

"Lipp!"

An excited whisper. Before the other officer was at his side, Sewell's hand had again stretched out and met resistance. Cautious exploration told him that that resistance was wooden. There was a boat there.

"Boat, huh?" whispered Lipp.

He and Sewell began to explore with their hands, while the man between them and the tow-path was instructed to pass the word to the men on the path to be sure that the rest of the patrol halted and remained on the alert.

"Boat," said Lipp with decision. "Big one. Who do you guess has been using it?"

"Somebody's been fishing," hazarded Sewell.

Lipp made no reply, probably because he could say nothing fitting in whispers, and then because the less conversation there was the less the danger of somebody hearing them from the north bank. Sewell could hear him fumbling about, then a gentle thud, as if he had lifted himself over the side and dropped into the bottom of the boat. A minute later a hand and a wet sleeve brushed his face.

"There's nothing in her," whispered Lipp. "She may have been here since the civilians pulled out. The rushes would hide her. Look out, I'm coming out on your side."

There followed then one of the interludes of deep silence, so that Sewell could hear the water lapping against the sides of the boat and the swift rustling of the current in the rushes. Far away on the north bank a shell clanged loudly, falling somewhere among houses by the sound. Then up and spake a voice that rang and echoed and reverberated like the last trump on Judgment Day.

"Corporal Dibello, you should go show it to the lieutenant what you found. I'll look out for things here. When you find it a Boche canteen the lieutenant should know it. Never mind back talk, I'm sergeants here."

The voice ceased and silence fell again with a suddenness that seemed to click.

"Jump up there and stop that, Sewell!" The whisper from the boat was frantic. "Try to show some intelligence! Don't you know enough to stop noise without my giving you a written order? Bat him over the head with your gun—anything!"

Sewell turned, and galloping on hands and knees went up over the bank and into the field beyond. The place rustled with whispers.

"Shut up, fer ——'s sake!"

"Plug that guy! Bottle his yawp before he gets us all killed!"

"Shshsh! Shshshsh! The Boche! The Boche'll open up on us!"

"Shshsh! Lie down!"

"Git up an' run! Let's dust t' —— outta here!"

"Oyk!" shrieked some one. The officer nearly leaped out of his own skin.

"Shut up!" he cried.

"Oy!" pleaded a tearful voice. "He come right up and grabs me in the back o' my neck with his cold hand! Who wouldn't yell?"

"You don't need to yell, you poor idiot!" snapped the officer. "Are you the man that's been doing all this talking and yelling?"

"Nope!" cried several voices, "it's the sergeant. We told him to shut up an' he won't!"

"All right!" said another voice. "Wait until he asks it again the cook, 'Give me a nice strong detail to lug the chow tonight.' "

"That's the man!" the officer said huskily. "Here, you, whoever you are, come over here! What do you mean by yelling?"

"I'm sergeants here," said the voice. "Who should want to know anyways?"

"I'm in command of this patrol!" replied Sewell as coldly as he could—it is hard to speak coldly in a whisper. "Who are you? Are you the sergeant that was ordered to stay behind?"

"A loafer by the name Lipovitchsky can't give me no orders!" replied the unseen. "I'm sergeants here, an' Sheehan is my name. I takes orders only from captains an' generals."

"Well, you'll take some from me and don't forget it. I'm in command here. This is Lieutenant Sewell speaking."

A pause.

"Well, you should have said so before," muttered Sheehan finally. "Well, Corporal Dibello, he found it a Boche canteen what you should see. If it gives canteens in this field, it gives Boche, too. I think we should tell somebody about it. If we should meet them here and every one begin to yell and all shoot and them —— fools from the flivver machine-guns would think it was Election Day or something and—"

"Never mind that now," said Sewell. "Give me the canteen. Come down and we'll see what Lieutenant Lipp thinks about this. You square yourself with him. He'll probably send you back under guard."

"You should think it!" said Sheehan with asperity. "He knows I would tell it about the time me an' him give it the organ man's monkey a hot penny an' the monkey dropped it an' Max forgot it was hot and grabbed it up again. Oy, Max. 'Stay here,' he says to me, 'an' tomorrow you'll be a private!' Does he think he could make me one? He couldn't make the pimples on a good private's neck!"

"Shut up!" ordered Sewell sternly, conscious of a great deal of merriment from the shadows. "Now then, let's go! You other men be on the alert, we've found something suspicious down the river bank."

The officer took the canteen from some mysterious hand, and turning, started back toward the river bank, Sheehan following, silent enough now, the officer thought. Who had ever made that man a sergeant?

They came back up river a little way and had to work up and down the towpath till they found the man there, and then they slid down to where the boat lay in the rushes.

"Who's that—that you, Sewell?" came a whisper from the boat in response to the officer's gentle tapping on the boat's side.

"Yes, this is Sewell. Some one found a German canteen up here in the field and that sergeant—"

"A canteen? Pass it here!"

A hand from the boat brushed Sewell's face; he seized it and put the canteen into it. The German canteen was a small, inadequate thing, with a short strap around the neck of it by which it could be attached to any convenient part of the wearer's equipment or clothing. It could be very easily detached by accident, which would account for the great number of these canteens that always cluttered the ground.

"It's Boche, all right,' whispered Lipp from the boat. "They've gone ashore here. This boat is a —— thing. They've got some kind of a rope attachment that brings it across the river. I've been trying to puzzle it out. Now this thing here is what I don't get. I wish I dared turn a light on it, I'd—"

Click! ZZzzzzzzip!

Sewell recoiled in horror, for the thing had clicked under his very nose. There was a rushing sound in the water, Lipp's excited voice, "Sewell!"—and when Sewell put out his hand, emptiness. The boat and the other officer were gone into the shadows. Sewell, in peril of his life, raised himself to his knees. He could see the river, just a black belt, the reflection of the stars wiped out by the swirling of the water; a blacker belt beyond that marked the north bank, but no sign of either boat or officer.

"He's gone!" muttered Sewell.

There was no sound from the far bank, not a shot, not a cry—just a wide belt, like a streak of ink, with the flares going up beyond it. The officer remembered now that he was in command of the patrol, that he was alone between the lines with all these men. What should he do? The men were as new at this sort of thing as he was. Hadn't they said so when the patrol started out? But this sergeant! They had said he was an old hand at patrolling! So far he had not shown any evidence of it, but now that things had become serious he might brighten up a little.

"Sergeant!" whispered Sewell, "what shall we do now? What's your advice?"

"We should go home," answered Sheehan, "and make it a report."

"And leave Lieutenant Lipp over there with the Boche?"

"Sure. Why not? Maybe he's just gone down the river to get home before us."

"Maybe not!" snapped the lieutenant. "What kind of a man are you? Your officer, and your old boyhood chum, and you'd abandon him to the enemy that way!"

"He said it ain't so," objected Sheehan. "He said he was a fellar by the name Lipp."

"But you didn't believe it."

"Oy!" answered Sheehan faintly. There was another pause, then he added on a hopeful tone, "I believe him now. I never seen him before." Another pause, then again, almost tearfully, "I just got back from escaping from the last time them Boche took me prisoner. Now I got to go over again after that loafer. Sooner he should get killed before all of us. He ain't nothing but a kike. Kikes is too plenty we should go rescue them when they got captured."

There was yet another period of silence, while the lieutenant tried to think whether it would not be better to send back a messenger, stating the condition of things and asking advice. But new as he was to the front he realized that the night was short, and that if anything was to be done it must be done quickly, before an early dawn discovered them to all the Boche on the river bank and the hordes on watch on the distant ridges.

"Oy! Listen, Lieutenant," said a cheerful voice in his ear, "we can't go across no river because we ain't got no boat. It's too deep to walk and a swimmer I never was. Now! We should just go back and say the lieutenant got captured."

"Psst!"

A sharp hiss from the man above them on the tow path. The officer's blood returned to his heart from all parts of his body, leaving his arms and legs cold and numb. No one moved or breathed. They knew that that man had not hissed for nothing, yet they dared not ask the reason. If he dared to tell them he would have done so.

The officer heard, in a moment, even above the roaring in his ears and the steady throbbing of his heart, a gentle *lap-lap* of water that he had not noticed before. He raised himself a little from the ground. There was nothing to see that he had not seen before, yet there was something there, a series of sounds

that he had not heard; there was a sense of movement, a soft lapping of water and a gentle sighing rustle, no louder than a man might make by drawing his hand over the rough canvas of his gas-mask carrier.

Ah! There was a shadow there! A shadow among the shadows, a blackness that moved. It was astonishingly near, and even while the officer looked he knew what it was. It was the boat. The rushes rustled as it crushed them under its keel; there was a gentle *shshsh* as the prow ran upon the mud, then silence again.

Should the lieutenant challenge or should he not? If Lipp was in the boat, it were better that the other speak first. A hand closed gently on the officer's wrist, and another one, muddy and foul-smelling, was shoved over his mouth. He shook his head and the hand was removed. How that mud stunk! Cautiously he wiped his face on his sleeve. It was time that Lipp said something.

Something moved before Sewell's eyes, something that must, from the sound, be a man dragging himself along on his stomach, and as soon as Sewell discovered this new man, he knew it was not Lipp nor any other member of the American patrol. It was a German, and this Sewell knew by the smell—a smell of drug-stores and of chloride of lime. The smell was strong, but not strong enough to disguise the fact that the crawling man had been long without a bath.

No one breathed and the crawling man disappeared. Sewell could hear his cautious progress up the bank, the scraping of his buttons on the tow path, then he was gone, and all was silent again.

What had happened? Was this the same boat that had broken from its mooring with Lipp, or was it another? It had come to the same spot that the other had left, the same spot to an inch. How could the enemy pick the place so well if it was another boat, or even if it was the same? Could they row it up river so silently and land it on that black bank on the very place it had left? Hardly. They must have a concealed light, a tree with its trunk rubbed with phosphorus, or a handful of phosphorus thrown on the grass to guide them. Where had this one man gone? Suppose he came back? He might have an enemy patrol with him.

The officer felt his ankle pulled and, considering it a signal to withdraw, he pushed himself backward with his hands, and so very cautiously withdrew quite a way from the boat. It took a long time and was a hair-raising task, for he could not see where he was going, and several times backed into the water. A hand seized his shoulder at last and then a voice whispered in his ear—

"Lootenant, you an' me we should beat it."

"Is that what you dragged me back here to say?" demanded the lieutenant angrily. He stifled a cough, for the vehemence with which he whispered hurt his throat. "What about the patrol up there in the field? Our men, I mean. How about abandoning them?"

"Oh, they'll come home. When it is breakfast time, you will see them all there with their mess-kits. A meal they wouldn't miss if they had a rope round their necks and was chucked in the Marne."

"We won't go!" replied the officer sternly. "Where did that German go? What would he come over for? What do you suppose happened to Lipp? Let's go back and see if we can tell if that's the boat that was there when we first got here or not."

"Oh no!" cried the other. "That boat you should leave alone. There is maybe another man in it or two or three. No. Come, we keep on going backward like we done and pretty quick we can get up an' run like ——. It ain't—"

"That'll do!" snapped the officer. "You're Sergeant Sheehan, of course. I thought I recognized your voice. If there's another man in that boat we'll have him out of it!"

"Maybe I would go back and get reinforcements," suggested Sheehan hopefully.

"Come with me," said the officer. "I'll make a report of you that won't be favorable unless you change your attitude.

They went back then, inching along like snails, the lieutenant driven by a remembrance that the night was only a few hours long and that on the far bank Lipp might be waiting with fading hope for the sight of a rescue or might be being dragged farther and farther from the bank by his captors while the Americans wasted their time in crawling about, in surmise and indecision. The latter was at an end. Sewell gritted his teeth. He was going to return to the boat, take as many men as it would hold and cross the river to see where Lipp had gone, combing the banks on both sides until he found some trace of him.

The lieutenant went back to the boat as rapidly as possible and Sheehan followed, for the officer could hear the other breathing. As he approached the boat, the officer went more carefully, but did not hesitate. He was like the man who rushes from a beach into cold water, hurrying and leaping to get it over with. His groping hand struck the boat, his other reached up for the gunwale, found it; the officer heaved up, and was in the boat. He landed across a thwart with a noise that seemed thunderous, the buckle of his belt caught somewhere and came loose with fearful rasping; the weight of his body caused the boat to rock and the water to splash under the stern.

He remembered he should have drawn his pistol before he got in the boat, but he had no time to now. Sheehan must be behind him, but his value in a rough-and-tumble was likely to be small. If there were Germans in that boat the lieutenant wanted to come to grips with them and quickly. His first move brought his face into heavy contact with a thwart, banging his nose and filling his eyes with tears, but he went over that, and his hand closed on a man's shoulder. The lieutenant leaped, hunting for the other's throat and they both went down in a heap, the boat rocking violently.

The German had been sitting in the bottom of the boat, his back against a thwart, and the lieutenant's rush had thrown him forward upon his face. The American struck a short, blind hook, trusting to find a vulnerable part. His first met flesh, soft and flabby, that gave under the blow like rubber. There was no return blow and the American struck again, then tried to free his feet from the angle between thwart and side where they were caught.

The body under him was motionless. Good. A few good American jabs would do for the best of them. However, it would be well to give him a tap with the pistol barrel to make sure he did not revive and give any embarrassing calls for help. The officer drew his gun and felt for the German's helmet. It came off after a tug or two and the officer's hand fell upon flesh—a nose, cold and damp; a face, colder still.

It was a cold night, thought the officer; he was cold himself. He shivered a little at the thought. Well, time flew. The officer began to feel the other's body for weapons. The other wore a belt and a pistol, which the officer took from its holster and threw into the Marne. His left hand groping upward struck wetness and slime, probably where the German had rolled in the water in the bottom of the boat.

Sewell himself was wet to the skin. Unthinking, he rested all his weight on the hand that was on the German, in order to turn about. Liquid welled up between his fingers, as if he had squeezed an orange. Was the German as wet as that? The officer sniffed at his wet hand. Blood! River water never smelled like that; it was blood, and the German's blouse was soaked with it.

Sewell was a young officer and this was his first experience with a dead man. He had wrestled around on the floor of that boat with a corpse and his desire now was to get as far as possible away from it. He went back to the bow of the boat, regardless of noise.

"Sheehan!" he whispered. No answer. He listened, but heard no breathing, no

sound of men. "Sergeant Sheehan!" he whispered again. No reply. "I might have known it," he thought, "he's gone! We'll never see *him* again!"

Well, what to do now? Who had brought this dead German across the river? Why had that man gone hurriedly out of the boat and up into the field? The best thing to do now seemed to be to go up and get the rest of the men and bring them down here. If the Germans were using this boat to transport their patrols, they'd certainly come back to it and the Americans would have to fight with them. Was that they coming now? Men were coming down the bank; the officer could hear them panting, and stones were dislodged from time to time to roll clattering down.

"Halt!" said a voice. "Now I will give it a look and if he is dead we will thank God and go home."

"Is that you, Sheehan?" whispered the officer. "Don't talk so loud. Not another word. Come here. There's a dead German in this boat. Come in and see what you think of him!"

There was no answer for a minute at least, then a cautious voice said:

"What's your name? Maybe it's the Boche has killed him and speaks it now English."

"My name's Sewell and yours is Weinerwurst or something like that, but it will be mud if you don't stop your —— foolishness. Come in here and see this dead man!"

"I honies the belt!" said an unknown voice.

"Well, you won't get no belt, Corporal Dibello," said Sheehan's voice severely, "because I am sergeants here and I want that belt myself. I ain't had one of them belts ever. A good belt is what I need—leather, with a buckle from brass and a silver crown."

Sewell went out of the boat with murder in his heart and sought the speaker. He struck blindly toward where he thought he would find Sheehan, but his fist met no resistance.

"I want silence!" hissed the officer. "The next man that speaks without reason will be put in arrest and I'll see that he gets a sentence that will take away his desire to speak the rest of his life. This isn't a back lot—this is between the lines and I don't want to get killed even if the rest of you do!"

"Now!" came a voice from the boat, "a pistol he ain't got. I betcha that shavey threw it away. Now fifty francs is gone to ——!"

"Unbutton his coat," whispered another voice from the boat. "Let's see what he's got on him. Feel has he got any rings."

"I know," answered Sheehan. "Their watches they wears in a pocket half-way down their pants leg. Why should a man—he's warm! Hey! Maybe he ain't dead! Give him a poke with your knife!"

The officer was by now in the boat again and, crawling over the thwarts, he was able to thrust himself between two men, one of whom he knew to be Sheehan.

"What's this?" demanded the officer. "He's warm, you say? You two shut up anyway. We'll all be dead if you keep on making noise." Hurriedly he thrust his hand under the German's blouse and felt for his heart. It was sticky there and the rough cotton shirt was soaked with blood, but the officer could feel no heartbeats. The German's hands and face were quite cold and, though his chest was warm, it was not as warm as a normal man's would be.

"This German hasn't been dead very long!" whispered the officer. "Who killed him?"

"That loafer Lipovitchsky!" suggested Sheehan.

"You mean Lieutenant Lipp? That's just what! But how—why did the other German bring him across? Or do you suppose that man that we saw was Lipp?"

"Nope," said the third man in the boat, "that wasn't Lipp. That was a kraut, because he went by me an' I smelled him. No looey ever smelled like that."

"Then Lipp is on the other bank and we'll go get him. He said they had some kind of an apparatus of ropes that worked this. It must be like a ferry. Sergeant, get another man—that will make four—enough for a boat this size. I'll see if I can find out how this thing goes and we'll be off."

A little pawing around in the dark showed the officer that there was a rope along the upstream side of the boat that led through two eyes, one at the bow and one at the stern. There was another rope that led from the stern on the downstream side and, following this with his hand, he found that it was slack and that it seemed to be trailing down river with the force of the current.

"Get right in," said Sheehan's voice from the rushes. "Never mind if it should be muddy. Lookit, now, give us a hand, Corporal Dibello, and overboard goes the Boche!"

Grunts and a loud splash. More grunts and the sound of men getting aboard. Their number seemed to be legion, the boat rocked and the officer could feel it sinking under his feet.

"How many have you brought?" he protested. "I said to get one more man!"

"When we go over where the Boche are, too many ain't enough," replied Sheehan. "Why should we leave all these men where they ain't no good? Anyway they would be lonesome."

It occurred to the officer that a saving of time and conversation would be had by simply unmooring the boat and beginning to pull it back across the river by the rope along the upstream side, the rope evidently being for that purpose. He felt for a mooring rope, found what he thought to be it, then hunted for the stake to which it must be tied.

Click!

Again that cursed thing clicked under his very nose, but this time there was no rushing of water and the boat remained stationary. The officer turned and, reaching his foot over the bow, shoved with all his might. The boat went out into the stream with surprizing ease, so that Sewell had some difficulty getting aboard. He could hear exclamations and floundering where other members of the patrol were trying to get in, or to seize the boat, but its progress was too swift. Also, instead of moving straight back across the river as it should, it was going downstream.

The lieutenant felt over the side for the rope that should be there and passed a freezing second or two when he found it was not there. The metal eyes he found, but they had opened, as they were evidently intended to, and had released the rope, so that the boat and its cargo was now going very pleasantly downstream.

The officer thought foolishly that if they only went on far enough they would eventually come to Paris, but the chances of it seemed dubious. He had heard that the river was mined. It would be nice to hit a mine, *with him in the bow!* At that he started to retire, but the progress of the boat came to a stop with a sudden jerk that, had he been in his former place in the bow, would have precipitated him into the Marne. The men in the boat fell against the thwarts and there was some grunting, but they held their peace, even Sheehan. They were alone on the black waters and the shadow of the banks lay on them like the Shadow of Death.

Lieutenant Sewell knelt in the bow of the boat trying to compose his mind and to find some way out of this mess without being killed or taken prisoner.

The boat seemed to be drifting steadily along in midstream, but they might run into trip flares or alarm wires or mines or any of the devices with which it was popularly believed the enemy had strewn the river. There was also the matter of Lieutenant Lipp, who might still be alive and in hiding on the far bank of the river. If there were oars in the boat now, or even a pole—

Sewell turned to see and noticed that the men in the boat seemed to be occupied in some kind of labor, judging from the regular grunts they emitted. The officer dared not even whisper in their ears to

ask what they were doing and it was too dark to see. Moreover, he dared not move about very much for fear of capsizing the boat. What now were these crazy fools doing? There was a slight clunking noise, and a smothered exclamation.

"The mine!" thought the officer, and stood up to cast himself overboard.

The boat rocked perilously. The men exclaimed.

"Wait now!" whispered Sheehan's voice. "We come to shore, but every man in his turn! And don't be in no rush, because this is the German shore!"

"There's a wharf!" whispered some one else. Sewell knelt again and, putting his hand over the side, felt boards, wet and slimy, and what seemed to be a mooring post. A shape appeared before his eyes and even as he reached for his pistol, the shape spoke.

"We come to the other end," said the voice. "There's the rope to go across on and everything. Gives it by the back end another rope and we pulled on it. Now all we got to do is pull on the other rope and we could go right home."

"What the —— is all this?" demanded the officer.

He got cautiously out of the boat on to the wharf or whatever it was and there felt his way to the stern of the boat, past what seemed to be a myriad of hands that held tightly to the wet boards to keep the boat from drifting. There was the rope that he had noticed before fastened firmly to the stern of the boat and another one that went off into the darkness across the river and splashed gently when he tugged at it. That must be the ferry rope.

Aha! This must be the place that Lipp had come to. Fine. Moor the boat securely, take the patrol and hurry up the bank with them. If there were guns in the vicinity they would have opened on the patrol long ago. Probably there was nothing nearer than the town. The patrol had but to go ashore and hunt for traces of Lipp.

"Can you tie up the boat?" whispered the officer into Sheehan's ear. "Fix it somehow—we'll need it when we come back. Have the men get out. We're going to try to find the other officer."

"And I'll stay to guard the boat!" suggested Sheehan hopefully.

"You will like ——!" replied Sewell.

He turned and, groping about, found the men's hands and pulled them, all unwilling, on to the platform. There were five which, with himself and Sheehan, made seven men.

"Be ready, men," whispered Sewell. "Follow me cautiously. We'll spread out when we get clear of these rushes. Is the boat fast?"

There was a sudden crack, a lurch of the platform and a shriek.

"Oh help! ——! *glubl*" There was a splashing and floundering that was thunderous. "Help!"

All rushed toward the sound and the platform sank alarmingly, so that the water came over it and all were in danger of falling into the river.

"Pull him in!" cried some.

"Hold the ——'s head under water!" said others.

It was dark and no one could tell whether the shrieking man had been pulled out or had climbed out himself, but suddenly all was silent again, except for the water lapping where the platform had made it splash against the rushes, and the running of water onto the boards where it drained from the man who had been in the river. Sewell could feel his hair growing white.

"Was that Sheehan that yelled?" demanded the officer. "By ——, you're a private from now on! Your sergeant days are over! Do you realize that you're on the German side of the river and that any minute a gun may cut loose and blow us all to ——?"

"Well, do you think I should drown and not say anything just to please a bunch of crazy lootenants? When a man falls in the water he's got a right to call for it help."

Sheehan stood in the center of the float, all dripping and festooned with rushes.

This float was not of German manufacture, but had been built by the women of the vicinity to wash their clothes from. It was not made to stand the weight of so many men and one end had broken from its supports, spilling Sheehan into the Marne. If they had not drawn fire with the sound of his cries and floundering, then the north bank was surely deserted. Thus thought Lieutenant Sewell.

"Listen, men," he began, "we'll go up now. We'll just look around and see if we can't find Lipp. We'll probably meet him coming back from somewhere. We've got the boat here to get away in in case anything breaks that we can't handle. Now then, silence. I'll lead the way and you fellows back me up if anything begins. Here we go!"

The officer crawled off the float and a sound of hobnails scraping on wood and the lapping of water where the float bobbed up and down showed that he was followed. His instructions had been vague enough, but they would do just as well as the most elaborate, since members of patrols, once a scrap started, did as they pleased, no matter what their instructions had been; and if no scrap started they had but to follow their leader, make as little noise as possible and keep their heads down.

There was a path, quite wide, that followed the edge of a wheat field and this the officer followed. He had a chilly thought that it would be unfortunate to meet Germans coming down this path. He had heard that the Germans had places through their wire and here and there in the wheat fields, that a man coming on them in the dark would think were paths, but which were in reality fire lanes, to allow their machine-guns a clear view of certain points. The officer cheered himself by the thought that it was dark and that the Germans would be expecting the return of their own patrol, and so would not be so likely to fire if they heard noise. Good! That being the case they could proceed more rapidly.

Sewell cursed the summer night. Why couldn't this war have been fought in the far north, where the nights were six months long instead of a few hours? Daylight must not find them on the north bank, Lipp or no Lipp.

How long had they been crawling? How far from the bank were they? Sewell stopped and, raising himself to a sitting posture, looked back. He could see the patrol strung out behind him like a fat snake, and to left and right, near and far, the light of flares. It was impossible to tell, due to the curvatures of the Marne and the consequent irregularity of the front lines, from which side these flares were coming or how far in from the bank the patrol was.

It was then that a feeling of panic came over him. He was green; this was his first patrol. What right had he to bring these men in here to their deaths? Yet what right had he to go home while there still remained time and darkness to find some trace of his brother officer? Well, he would consult with the sergeant. The sergeant was an old campaigner, a little erratic, perhaps, but at least accustomed to patrolling.

"Where's the sergeant?" whispered the officer, bending over the man next behind him. "Send the word back for the sergeant."

The whisper went back and after a long time the lieutenant heard a dry scraping. *Scrrrape! Scrrrape! Scrrrrape!*

"Lay off that noise!" hissed the officer, but some one answered him from a few inches away.

"D-d-d-d-did you w-w-w-ant me?" whispered a voice. "Oy! C-c-cold like I am I should g-g-get my death from nuh-nuh-monyuh!"

"Never mind that!" said Sewell. He put out his hand, found a very wet ear and pulled the ear over to his mouth. "Listen, Sergeant, I want to know what you think we should do. Time flies. It'll be light in a while. Where do you suppose Lipp has gone? If they'd got him, don't you think that we'd have heard a scrap? How about the dead man in the boat? Do you think that was Lipp that came over with the stiff and

then went up the bank past us that time? Their patrol can't get back because the boat is on our side of the river. Do you suppose they can signal over or anything when they come down and find their boat gone? Would it be better to follow this path or to spread out and comb this whole wheat field alongside us, working down the bank?"

"We should g-g-go home," chattered Sheehan through hammering teeth, "and have it a g-g-good shot coneyac and g-g-go to bed. For that l-l-loafer Lipovitchsky nuh-nuh-monyuh I wouldn't get!"

"We'll go on a ways," replied the officer. "Stay with me."

"Oh no," protested Sheehan, his chill forgotten in his excitement, "sergeants should be at the rear!"

"Why?" asked the officer.

"Oy! If the lieutenant gets killed, sergeants is in command, and we should want to go home. If a man is in the rear it ain't so far to run."

"Well, we'll go on," said the officer coldly. "Keep right beside me."

Bang!

The lieutenant swallowed his heart and throwing out his hand instinctively, secured a handful of wet blouse and thus prevented the immediate departure of Sheehan to the rear. That rifle or pistol or whatever it was had been fired from close at hand. It had a peculiar sound to it, that the officer had never heard before. All lay quietly for several minutes, then the officer began to advance cautiously.

He was, as near as he could judge, about a hundred yards from the river bank, and among wheat, so that it seemed impossible that the patrol had been seen. Moreover, the enemy would not just fire one shot at them, but would open with numbers of machine-guns. At least that was what he had heard from all accounts.

Bang! Closer this time. The blouse that the officer still held in his hand was wrenched away, but the officer grabbed again, blindly, seized an ankle, and there was a heavy fall.

"Let go!" whispered a voice. "I seen them shooting at us. Run like ——!"

"Where did you see them?" demanded another, and then the officer, turning about, was beside Sheehan himself.

"Where did you see them?" repeated the officer.

"I ain't telling no lies!" protested Sheehan. "I seen them and that is enough. Let's g-g-go!"

He seemed to be shaken by another fit of chills, for they could hear his body scratching the gravel as he shivered.

"Where are they?" demanded the officer.

"Right there!" replied Sheehan. "Bang! goes something and g-g-gives it a light in the grass."

"Show me where this is!" cried the officer, his mind whirling.

Could it be Lipp signaling? A light in the wheat! Perhaps for airplanes. And it would be for allied planes, too. The Boche wouldn't have signals of their own here, or would they? They might have lights to show the position of their front line.

"Show me!" he panted.

"Oy, I don't know where it is," protested Sheehan. "The path to the boat I could show you swell!"

The officer, intending to seize and throttle the sergeant, raised to his knees, thus bringing his head on a level with the top of the wheat. At that instant there was another explosion, and a long white line like that left by a rocket shot from a dark mass to their left into the wheat field, where it seemed to ignite a fire that glowed for some time. What was that mass from which the light came? Could it be the town?

No, a closer scrutiny showed it to be a grove of trees; the officer could make out their tops against the stars. Should he go in, or not? He had begun to despair of finding his brother officer, but he might be able to take a prisoner that could give them some idea of Lipp's fate. He had begun to remember, also, that the mission of the patrol had been to find and destroy hostile patrols on the south bank of the Marne, and not to spend the night

on the north bank looking for an officer who might at that very minute be home in bed. The time for return was drawing rapidly nigh and the presence of a prisoner or two would go a long way to prevent any criticism of the patrol's going across the river when they had no authority to do so.

"Forward!" commanded the officer. "We're going to scout around in this grove a minute and if we don't find anything we're going home. It's getting near daylight. Pass the word down that we're going forward."

The lieutenant took Sheehan by the wrist and, dragging the sergeant with him, went on. The grove was not far, but almost at once the patrol came upon signs of the enemy. A wiser man would have hesitated, but this was the lieutenant's first experience, and he did not realize the danger the patrol was in. There was a great deal of straw in the path, such as the Germans used to line fox-holes, gun-pits and shell-holes with, to keep them warm during such times as they had to lie out and watch. The lieutenant crawled over a blanket, broad in the center of the path, that some tardy soldier hurrying to his post had dropped.

Bang!

The thing had exploded under the very face of the officer. Sheehan struggled to free his wrist, but the officer hung on too hard. He knew now what this banging meant. Some one was firing flares, and that some one was shortly going to become a guest of the United States Army. The officer remembered that he had arranged no signal for a combined attack by all members of the patrol. Well, too late now.

He and Sheehan went forward inch by inch, for perhaps six feet. Then suddenly the officer heard the snap and click of metal, fumbling, a tiny rattling of small objects and a man grunting. He lay still, and sniffed the air. Yes, it was the same smell that he had noticed on the river bank earlier in the night, but it was overlaid by another, a stronger smell, that of alcohol. There was then a German there and he had been drinking.

A grunt, a protesting wheeze, an arm seemed to be shoved out of the ground—*bang!* A flash and the hiss of a flare, but instead of going up into the air as it should have or out into the wheat as the others had, it shot back into the grove, struck a tree and fell to the ground, where it fizzed and smoked and lighted up the surrounding bushes. Then the lieutenant leaped. He landed on a soft yet bony form. There was a rasping, surprized grunt, but no resistance. The officer seized a hand, twisted it, grabbed for and found another, and held on.

"Crack him on the skull!" he panted, "or gag him! Who's got a piece of rope? Where's the rest of the patrol?"

The rest of the patrol leaped at that moment on to the lieutenant and the prisoner, to the former's disgust.

"Here! For ——'s sake, get off me!" he panted. "I've got a jerry here. Where's Sheehan? Can't we gag this bird? What do you do with 'em? Sheehan, you've taken prisoners, what do you do? Where is that —— kike? Gone, I suppose, the minute I let go his wrist."

"I ain't no kike," protested Sheehan, "and I ain't gone neither! All you should do is to put your gun under his ear. Anyway he is drunk. Oy, what a smells it gives. Like a barroom!"

Ah, drunk! A canteen of hard liquor perhaps, to keep out the cold and rheumatism! And the sentry was drunk! Such things could happen even in the iron-disciplined German army, then. No wonder the flares went into the ground instead of the air! Well, here was a prisoner, and now to get him home! His capture had been easy. Why not take back another? It would be just as easy to guard two or even three as one. The present prisoner the lieutenant could hear breathing thickly. He was docile enough, but cold steel applied to the little hollow behind a man's ear makes gentle the most unruly, and the meaning of that steel is the same in any language. So far so good. On into the grove, thought

Lieutenant Sewell, and take another prisoner.

"Sergeant Sheehan, guard this kraut," whispered the officer, "then bring the rest along. We're going on."

"No, we ain't!" chattered Sheehan vehemently. "Maybe you think them Boche is boys scouts something! Well, they ain't! We get out of here quick. Already comes somebody soon to see who shoots that light into them trees. Listen!"

The officer listened, cupping his hand behind his ear. The machine-guns down river spattered faintly, the guns still growled and airplanes high in the air thundered by. A breeze rustled the wheat, and the lieutenant smelled the coming day. Beyond the grove a door slammed, or it might have been a distant shell. The officer thought he heard feet clattering over stones. It might be the machine-guns. He felt a sharp sense of danger, that unknown sense that sometimes warns and sometimes is mute had spoken to him.

Sheehan was right. Those hills beyond the river were full of observation posts, and the watchers would not allow flare after flare to be fired into the ground or cast negligently into the treetops without doing some telephoning. And the result of this telephoning would be the despatch of a patrol to see what was causing the singular performance of the flares.

"Get him out of there!" cried the lieutenant, "and we'll go. To the rear march! And fast!"

"Good!" agreed Sheehan. "Lieutenant, you and me we would go first to see if everything is all right!"

"Here! No, we won't! I will, but you stay in the rear with the prisoner. Take as many men as you need to help. Now, then!"

The patrol swung about and, scuttling like crabs, hastened back along the path. They dragged the silent prisoner out of his straw-lined lair and started him crawling with the rest, Sheehan on one side and Corporal Dibello on the other. The lieutenant, on hands and knees, led. All went swiftly, and from time to time the officer could hear whispers.

"Come on, hurry, you! Oy, he don't understand a word of English. Corporal Dibello, with your trench knife give him a poke behind!"

Again:

"Oy! That ——! He ain't g-g-got nothing on him to drink! Another chill I g-g-got. The loafer that should d-d-drink up all what he g-g-got!"

They paused while the lieutenant rose to his knees to get his bearings. Things were different, he sensed that at once. There was a stir and a murmur that was audible even above the distant firing. It might be the sector waking up for the new day. There were several hundreds of thousands of men in the neighborhood and these men getting out of their blankets and preparing to "stand to" would make quite a disturbance. Yet could it be time for "stand to?" That was just before daybreak.

A flare burst on the American side, half-way up the hillside. It was a bright blue, a ball of amethyst, that hung and sparkled for a long time. Now what did that mean? It was too low for an artillery flare. Well, since it was American, who cared what it meant?

Bang! From behind them this time. The waiting men stirred and made sounds as if they were getting to their knees to look. From the woods shot a rocket, and when it burst it gave birth to a string of green stars, directly over the patrol. The ghastly light shone on their upturned faces and was reflected from their eyes, but it did not light the wheat the way a flare would have. As if it had been a signal, other rockets soared, all bursting into the chain of green stars.

"I know what them are," cried some one. "Them's the 'alert.' The air was full of 'em when they grabbed off that patrol from the Seventh last week! It means there's a patrol over!"

The officer's first thought was to leap to his feet and run, then he remembered that this was folly. If a patrol had come down to the place where the Americans

had taken their prisoner and found the hole empty, they would perhaps fire an "alert" signal. Yet all around similar rockets had gone up both from the sides and from behind the American patrol. It did not seem possible that every German listening post had had a man with a rocket ready to fire instantly. And why fill the air with them? One was enough to arouse the whole north bank.

It seemed as if they had all been fired in response to the same signal. What? Had the patrol been heard? Hardly. They made far less noise now than they had before. And the Germans must still be watching for their own patrol. Ah, their own patrol! They were the ones that had fired that blue light! The man that had brought back the boat after Lipp had first disappeared had warned them. He had returned and found the boat gone, and then alarmed his comrades.

The "alert" signals had been fired in response to that blue flare! The lieutenant knew that he had reasoned correctly in this matter because the wheat that had been so long silent leaped into noisy life, pounding and clattering.

The patrol made for the river without command. The firing might not be at them, but they were going to be on their way. Some rose and ran, bent over, others still crawled on hands and knees, but they all hurried. The German guns, echeloned in the wheat fields, pounded heavily. It was impossible to tell where these guns were, for a machine-gun in action in front of hills sounds as if it is right beside the hearer, even though it may be five or six hundred yards away. The gunners were probably firing blindly on sectors directly in front of them, and the path and landing had been left unassigned, at least to the machine-guns.

A shell landed behind the Americans, and another a little way to the left. Two more socked down, and the machine-gun fire lessened, for the gunners were not going to stay above ground to be blown to bits by their own artillery.

The patrol arrived finally at the slight slope that led down to the wharf, and the officer's heart lightened. Now they had but to go down and get into the boat. The prisoner must be put in first, however.

"Tell 'em to bring up the prisoner," gasped the lieutenant. "Quick, bring up the jerry!"

"Bring up the jerry!"

"Hey, quick with the prisoner, we're at the river! Send him up here!" hurried whispers went back.

"Yes, sir!" and "Sure, give him a poke, now, Corporal Dibello," said the two guards simultaneously.

There was a sharp cry of surprize, too loud.

"Hey, let go, or gives it a rap with a pistol on the dome!"

"Grab him, grab him! He's putting up a fight!"

Sssssssswish-plop! And a flare illumined the scene. Corporal Dibello and Sheehan were on their knees clutching each other's throats, the members of the patrol looking at them with open mouths, but of the prisoner there was no sign.

"Where's the prisoner?" shouted the officer. He shouted at the full power of his lungs, for guns roared now all about them.

Sheehan and Dibello released their holds, and he could see their mouths working as each either reviled the other or demanded the whereabouts of the prisoner.

Flares kept going up so that the place was as light as day, but the wheat would conceal the Americans for a while. The watchers on the hills would see them, though, and that in a very short time. A hurried look over his shoulder showed Sewell that the river was in darkness, and the banks would be some shelter from fire. He got to his feet and, bending low, ran to where Sheehan and Dibello still regarded each other.

"Where's the prisoner?" cried Sewell. "What have you two idiots done with my prisoner?"

"I had hold of him by the ear," cried

Sheehan, "and when the lights went on it was Dibello!"

"I was crawlin'," said Dibello. "A guy's gotta have two hands to crawl with. Well, every few crawls I'd stop an' put out my hand an' there he was. An' it was Sheehan!"

"Look around! He can't be far! You've lost him! Oh God, and you two are non-commissioned officers! Well you won't be long! Don't gape at me, look around! Ah well, he's gone! So we'll go back and get another."

It was plain to the officer as soon as he had spoken that it would be impossible to return for another prisoner. The sector hummed like a nest of wasps. There would be moments of comparative quiet, then machine-guns would crackle in all directions like a bunch of fire-crackers.

It was time the patrol went. No one had been hit as yet. Machine-guns make a great deal of noise, but when the gunners have no definite target, and frequently when they have, the gun barks are worse than their bites. Yet if the patrol were once located— The officer turned about, grinding his teeth in rage and disappointment.

"Come on," he ordered. "Let's get into the boat and get out of here."

He started down the slope to the float, where a number of indistinct shapes marked the rest of the patrol. A voice came out of this mass, an excited voice, apprehensive and hurried.

"Sir," said the voice, "the boat's gone!"

"Oy! Prisoner gone, boat gone, all gone! And for that loafer Lipovitchsky. Didn't I tell it to the lieutenant not to come? For a kike what his father sewed pockets in overalls to send him to the high school! Sooner he should—"

"Yipe!"

"Oh! He hit him! Don't hit no corporal, Lieutenant. Corporals is non-commissioned officers. And sergeants neither." The voice faded a little as if Sheehan put himself at a discreet distance.

"I hope I didn't hurt you, Corporal," said the lieutenant. "I was reaching for Sheehan to make him stop talking."

What seemed to be a handful of pebbles was suddenly thrown into the water by the float, then the water was beaten as if by an enormous stick. The patrol recoiled, then crowded up the bank in a panicky mob. The pebbles landed on the float, drumming on the boards and there was a sound of rending wood. Had the patrol been seen, or were they just firing on the float for luck?

Dirt flew, and stalks of wheat, and a gun, searching up and down, lashed the Marne into foam from bank to bank. Another flare went up from close at hand and its light showed the members of the patrol to each other, their eyes wide and staring, their faces a greenish-white. All thought of discipline, all semblance of control was lost; the patrol was just seven terror-stricken men upon whom the shadow of death had fallen.

"Under the bank!" said Sheehan. "Maybe the boat drifted down river! Anyway in the high grass they can't see us!"

He evidently remembered his fall from the float into the rushes. No one stopped to see whether his solution was feasible; they all rushed for the bank again, floundered in the mud, tripped in the tangled rushes, but withal they seemed to be safer here than before. The bank made a shadow so that the flares did not shine on them, and the guns, that still beat the river around and beyond the float, did not change their target.

Shells began to fall, however, unpleasantly close. These shells were American, a barrage laid down on the wheat field. Some infantryman, disturbed by the sudden burst of machine-gun fire, had probably fired a barrage rocket, and the artillery were complying with the request. The patrol, once at a safe distance from the float, lay in the shelter of the bank and panted. They were still alive, but a long way from home. A man had but to listen to the water rushing swiftly by or to thrust his hand into the current to realize that no

one but a strong swimmer could reach the other bank that way.

Daylight was not far off. A man looking overhead could see the black dome already fading to gray. Two armies would line their advance posts in a short time, and any one in between would be like wheat between two millstones.

"Let's go on further," said the officer hopelessly, "and see if we can't find some trace of the boat."

A light went up, seemingly over their very heads, but when it went out the patrol started down river again, trying to make as little noise as possible. The gunfire had lessened slightly, but it was still too active for comfort, and the barrage in the wheat had brought a retaliating fire on the American lines on the south bank. The noise would help deaden the sound of the patrol's floundering.

Plop! went another flare. Several of the patrol cried out; then, regardless of how they exposed themselves to possible watchers, all stood up and looked.

"There's the boat!" cried all.

It was there, sure enough, about ten or fifteen yards away, the back of it in shadow, but the bow plainly outlined by the flare. All started toward it, regardless of whether they were waist-deep in water or not, then just as suddenly halted and tried to efface themselves. The figure of a man had been outlined for a second against the light, and this man wore on his head a helmet of peculiar shape, like an inverted coal-scuttle. A German! The enemy must have a post there, and it was lucky the light had showed the man to the patrol or they would have run right into him and his companions.

"What to do now?" thought lieutenant Sewell.

The enemy on one side, the river on the other, a gun crew or listening post in front, a machine-gun barrage behind. A man could always surrender, but finding some one to surrender to would be difficult. Further progress along the bank was impossible because of the German they had seen. Suppose he were one of a crew setting up a gun to enfilade the river?

"Sheehan!" whispered the officer.

He heard the others repeating his call for the sergeant, but there was no response. Had he been killed or had he just stayed behind, crouching panic-stricken in the rushes? Sewell would have a report to make of that sergeant, if he were so fortunate as to ever get back where a report could be made. Losing the prisoner, too!

Still, it was lucky the patrol had no prisoner to encumber them or even to yell and give the alarm and the location of the patrol to every listening post and machine-gun on the north bank. A flare went up down river, lighting up both banks as if a searchlight had been turned on.

The patrol started to hurl themselves into the mud or against the bank, but instead remained motionless. The light showed them the boat, turned now, and lying close in to the bank, the crouching figure of a German holding it and a smaller figure that rose suddenly from the rushes. The smaller figure wore an American helmet and had its hand raised in air. Down came the hand—*sock!* The light went out.

The patrol, laughing, dashed splatteringly through the mud and water until they came to the boat. Men who are keyed to the highest pitch of excitement laugh or cry with equal facility.

"I got him," cried Sheehan, "with a piece chain I found on the path! Pow! And the boat, too."

The bank roared like an enraged lion. A sudden coughing, rattling thunder.

"Those are our guns!" cried every one. "They must 'a' seen us! They're barragin' the jerries! Intuh the boat an' let's go!"

"Right, men," agreed the officer, "into the boat!"

All at once got in, clambering over the thwarts and falling into the river, to be pulled out again by their comrades.

"Where'll we put the prisoner?" panted the lieutenant.

As befitted his rank, he was the last man to get in the boat, and it was plain from the sound and the feel of hands along the gunwale that there was very little room left. Time flew, for another flare might discover them at any second. Somewhere up-river grenades were being thrown, exploding under water with a glorious *kerchung!* And it was light. A man could see the hills, sharp against the first light of dawn.

"To —— with that jerry!" decided Sewell. "Leave him! What became of his friends? Was he all alone? Let's go before we get killed!"

"No," said Sheehan, "I took him and to me he belongs. I can pull him behind the boat. Lookit. My belt around his neck and he won't drown. Get in."

The officer leaped into the boat, but it stuck fast in the mud, and would not move. Two men got out, and in water up to their waists, shoved clear and the boat shot out into the current, gone now, for better or worse. It was light, and the flares going up. And all those guns going! Sewell's heart seemed to choke him as the boat swung around in the current and began to move.

"Come on!" he cried. "Row like ——!"

There was a sound of scrambling feet, groping hands and exclamations.

"There ain't no oars!" said some one finally. The officer could have wept. This was probably the very boat they had come over in and of course there were no oars. He felt physically sick.

"Let go his arm, Corporal Dibello," said a voice from the stern. "I can hold him. See can you row with your helmet. Helmets is like paddles."

"That's right!" cried Sewell. "Every one row with his helmet. All on the right side. I'll give the word! Uh! Stroke! The river isn't very wide! Stroke! The-uh-current-will-uh-help us!"

The boat moved on, borne by the current; and the five men, paddling frantically on one side with their helmets, turned the bow enough so that its course was diagonal, and it grounded on the far bank in less than a minute. The patrol went out of it with alacrity, up the bank, across the tow path and down the far side. Dirt flew from the tow path as sand flies from a target butt. The patrol must have been seen crossing the path. The Americans had seen or heard them, too, for the south bank sparkled with lights like a boulevard.

The officer looked quickly about to see if he recognized where he was, but it was all strange. There were the ruins of a bridge down river, with railroad tracks trailing from it, but no sign of house or town. Guns hammered, grenades cracked and barrages rumbled on both sides of the river.

"Hey!" yelled the officer. His voice seemed lost as soon as it left his mouth. "Here, altogether now! We'll yell, 'We're Americans.' Now. One, two, three—"

"We're Americans!"

It was a lusty cry and the noise diminished at once. A little while more and a dead silence fell on the south bank in front of the patrol, though on all sides and on the other bank the firing still continued.

"Whaddyou say?" called a faint voice.

"We're Americans, lay off shooting!" called the lieutenant.

There was a mocking laugh.

"That's what they all say!" replied the distant speaker.

Sewell remembered that there was a trench in there, and the speaker must be in it, along with the machine-guns. A flare soared, showing the men against the bank in clear relief.

"Let Sergeant Sheehan speak to us!" called the man in the trench.

"Sheehan!" cried Lieutenant Sewell.

No answer. He looked at the men of the patrol shielding their faces from the glare of the light. There were only three. Sheehan, Dibello and the latest prisoner were missing.

"Come on, Sheehan, up, or we'll pepper you! We can see you fine!"

The light went out, there was a sound of scratching gravel and something rolled down the bank.

"Where the —— is the fire?" inquired a wrathful voice amid sounds of spitting dirt. "Of course none o' you sprint runners would happen to think me'n the sergeant was luggin' a ton o' limp jerry!"

"Who's that?" cried the officer. "Is that Dibello? Have you got Sheehan with you?"

"Yes," said another voice, "and with me is the prisoner."

"He's an officer, too," exclaimed Dibello. "I can tell by the feel of his uniform."

"Never mind that," interrupted Sewell. "Yell to the Americans, tell them who you are, before they make us look like nutmeg graters."

"Hey!" piped Sheehan, "don't shoot! This is me, Sergeant Sheehan. Don't shoot and it gives drinks the next payday!"

"Come on in!" called the distant man, "one at a time!"

The prisoner gurgled and then gave a hoarse cry, followed by something in German.

Clank! Silence.

"He won't holler no more!" said Sheehan cheerfully. "With the chain I gave him a tap."

"Come on, come on," cried Sewell. "Let's get into the trench and get home before we get killed. Every one help carry the prisoner."

The five men gathered up the inert form of the German and, led by the lieutenant, they all ran across the field and leaped down into the trench. It was just a shallow ditch, unprotected by wire, but it felt like home.

"Lieutenant Sewell?" asked some one. "I'm in charge here. Name's Davis. I had instructions to advance nobody unless they could produce Sheehan first. The Boche can imitate Americans, but not Sheehan. Lost any one?"

"Five men," said Sewell sadly, "but I don't imagine they suffered any harm. We left 'em on this side, but Lieutenant Lipp is gone for good. He got taken across in a drifting boat and we couldn't find a trace of him." His tone brightened. "But we brought back a German officer in exchange though. We've got him right here. He doesn't know he's been captured."

"Good enough!" exclaimed Davis. "How'd you ever get him across the brook? Sure he's still alive?"

"Sure is," said Sewell. "He started to yelp a few minutes ago and had to have another soother on the jaw to quiet him."

"Well, rush him to the P. C. I'll give the skipper a ring and let him know you're on the way. He's been anxious about you."

"Is this F company's sector?" asked Sewell.

"Sure. Didn't you see the bridge? We run from the bridge up as far as the wall around that big château. Well, congratulations."

"Thanks. Come on, men, bring on the prisoner! I'll hurry ahead. Right down the trench I suppose?"

"Right," said Davis. "Here, Corporal Bateman, go along with the lieutenant to show him the road to the P. C."

The patrol picked up their prisoner and moved on, shoving and jostling, for the trench was full of men called to arms by the firing. It was time for "stand-to" anyway, and day was coming rapidly. All crowded to look at the inert prisoner, but could see nothing of him save a dripping, shadowy form, coal-scuttle helmet still in place, borne on the shoulders of four men, while the fifth walked ahead, swinging a length of chain.

Lieutenant Sewell, being unencumbered, reached the post of command first and hurried down the garden walk, and so to the cellar he had left with such misgiving the evening before. The captain he found wrapped in his trench coat making coffee on an alcohol stove. The two officers wrung each other's hands.

"I thought you were gone, by —— I did," said the captain. "The rest of the patrol turned up and said Lipp was gone and that you'd gone off down river in a boat to find him. Well, what's it all about? The major's coming over, also

some frog liaison officer. By the way, we've caught —— from the French already for bringing on a general engagement. What started all that shooting? Boy, there's been excitement enough for one night. Why, about an hour ago—well, you tell yours first; I'll tell mine later. Who's that coming in? That the patrol? No, I guess it's the major. So it is. Good morning, Major, here's our lieutenant back. By his looks and the racket outside, he must have had an exciting time."

"Favil's my name," said the major. "I didn't meet you yesterday morning, I'm sorry to say, but the adjutant said you'd reported. Had you at work right off, I see. Well, what's the story? I hear they got Lipp."

"Yes, sir. We went over after him, but couldn't find a trace. But we brought back a German officer in place of him. Maybe he can tell us what happened."

"Where is he?" demanded the major. "Let's have him in. Captain Flammarion will be here in a minute or two; he speaks German. We'll examine him."

"The patrol is bringing him, sir," said Sewell. "They ought to be here in a very short time."

"While we're waiting I might as well tell you what went on here," said the captain. "It was a quiet night and I'd turned in when I got a buzz on the wire from L company, up in the Château d'Esparre. They wanted to know if we had a patrol out. Said, 'Sure.' Well L company wanted to know what the —— they were doing in their sector, but as long as I claimed 'em it would be all right. I said there was a new officer in command and although he had a scout officer with him they might easily wander over there.

" 'Turn 'em loose,' I said, 'an' let 'em come home.'

" 'Sure thing,' says L Company. 'Sorry I got you out of bed, but you know this new order says to hold and identify all patrols found in your sector.'

" 'All right,' says I, 'that Jew sergeant of mine would identify a patrol from my company in ——!'

"I heard L company mutter to himself about a Jew sergeant, then he yells to bring some one over; then he yells a little excited—

" 'There's bohunks here and wops, but no Jew.'

"Then one thing led to another and we found we'd grabbed off a patrol of twelve Germans composed of Italians, Poles, Greeks and what-not, like any American patrol, and every —— one of them speaking English. They think there were some we didn't get because about the time that the Boche were being ushered into the cellar and disarmed, a blue rocket goes up out of the wheat on our side and then the shooting started. I was just congratulating myself that this 'ghost patrol' business was over when in blew my five men with the announcement that the rest of the patrol and the two officers was across the river."

"Did those Germans have on American uniforms?" asked Sewell.

"Yes," said the major, "every one. Name on the gas mask, collar ornaments, pistols, trench knives and grenades. All regulation."

"Here's the patrol," cried the captain, as feet crunched in the yard. Down the stairs they came, thumping and muttering; then into the cellar, where they laid the German on the floor.

"Well, Major, there he is!" said Lieutenant Sewell with a ring of honest pride in his tones.

The captain held up the lantern and all bent to look at the German. He was a tall, well built man in a finely cut uniform. He lay on his face and the side of his helmet had two great dents in it.

"Now, there's another one ripe for a firing squad," exclaimed the major. "See! That's an olive drab uniform he's got on. Swing that lantern down a little lower, Captain!"

The captain complied, and all could see that what the major had said was true. The German had on an American officer's uniform, minus collar ornaments and rank marks. The major bent down and, lifting the German's head, removed the

helmet. There was a simultaneous cry from every throat. The man on the floor was Lieutenant Lipp.

"Get that helmet out of sight," said the major finally. "Say nothing about this in front of the French. There's a scent of rat here. Now he isn't dead, I can see that, so before he comes to, we'll do a little investigating. Captain, get Berkshire on the phone and tell them to send me over the fellow that commanded that patrol we captured. He's got a captain's uniform on." The major's face became very grim and hard. "If we strike while the iron's hot, we're liable to make all kinds of sparks fly."

"You don't think Lipp's a German, do you?" asked the captain in horror-stricken tones.

"Hah, hah!" laughed Sheehan hoarsely, "he ain't no German. I used to go to school with him. He's a kike. From Weehawken he comes—don't I know his old man? Pockets he sewed in overalls so that Max should go to the high school! His sister Ida runs it a shop ladies' notions on Sumner Avenuh. Better—"

"That's enough!" said the major coldly. "Who's this man that knows Lipp?"

"His name ain't Lipp, it's Lipovitchsky. Didn't I go to the party when he was twenty-one? With a nose like his a man couldn't make a mistake. With that nose he should be a rabbi."

"That's Sergeant Sheehan," whispered the captain behind his hand.

"Oh, is that Sheehan?" asked the major with interest. "I heard that when they were trying *him* for being a spy that time he broke up the court and they had to adjourn it. This sounds like company. I hope it is our German captain."

Some one lifted aside the blanket and saluted. It was a sergeant of military police, and he reported that the prisoner was in the passage. They had him in and at the same time a French liaison officer arrived, with the French general commanding the sector on the left, who, the liaison officer explained, had come alone and out of curiosity, and in no sense in his official capacity.

"Now then," began the major, addressing the prisoner, "you know the very serious position in which you find yourself. Are you a captain? Yes? Well, we want to ask some questions. Our Army, you know, hasn't the authority as yet to execute spies summarily, but the French on our right and left have, and there are some Italians between Sablonieres and Montmirail that have."

The prisoner smiled a little disdainfully, but they could see that his face was white. He did not look like a German, but more like an Italian or a Frenchman, and in his American uniform any one would take him for an American officer.

"What questions would you like to ask?" he said in English that, though not faultless, was nevertheless clearly learned in America.

"Is this patrol that we captured the only one that's been working this racket?" asked the major.

"Yes."

"I doubt it like ——," replied the major. "How have you been getting across the river?"

"By swimming. We swam and had our American uniforms hidden on this side. Then when we finished the patrol we hid them again and swam back."

"You lie like ——," cried Sewell. "How about this ferry-boat you were working?"

"Take him out!" snapped the major. "This time tomorrow the wops will have back their strayed sheep to make a target out of."

"To —— with them," cried the prisoner, "and you, too, and the whole —— American army! Wait until we get through with you, you'll wish to —— you never—"

At this point the M. P.'s took him in hand, thrust him out the door and, once in the corridor, they enforced immediate silence by methods of their own. The sergeant, however, returned and whispered in the major's ear.

"Ah, good," said the major, "bring

him in! That's using the bean all right. I've got a fine bunch of police, Captain. They've been using a little third degree on the patrol. Nothing that old Soft Susy can write me a memo about or that there's liable to be any comeback to—just a little persuasion. They've got a man that will talk and they brought him along unknown to our black-eyed officer."

They brought in another prisoner, a blue-eyed, simple looking lad, hardly eighteen.

"He says he's a Pole," began the sergeant, "and that he lived in Three Rivers, Mass., until he was fourteen. Then his father died and his mother brought him back to the Old Country. The krauts drafted him last year."

"That so?" asked the major.

"Yup, that's so," answered the prisoner. Every one in the cellar jumped to hear the American words come from a man that was fighting on the German side.

"How about these patrols in American uniform?" asked the major. "How many are there? How do they get across? What's the idea anyway? Here, tell us all you know about it. Have a cigaret."

The prisoner took the cigaret, drew in several lungfuls of smoke and then began.

"About the other patrols," said he, "I dunno. There's others. They go over on the Americans up near Dormans, only it's harder, because they got Southerners in that outfit and we didn't have no one could speak Southern. We find all kinds of information. Dumps, P. C.'s, and echelons is what they look for. So they can bombard 'em when the big drive starts. You're goin' to get it here in a week or so and get it good. The uniforms they got from dead over back of the hill there where we had the fight with the Americans in June. Only lately we could tell that they were suspicious.

"We'd stop a team on the road to ask the way to an echelon or a dump, and the driver would lick up his horses and go. A man on a rolling kitchen took a shot at us. We had our get-away all planned, too, only tonight they had us proper. A man came up to us—one of our men. He was a guard on the boat and said there was a patrol on both sides of the river, where we'd come across. He was scared. They stabbed his partner, he said. They heard a patrol on the American bank, so they pulled our boat back to the German side of the river. That was so your patrol wouldn't find it. Then they thought they heard men in the water on their side. They got in the boat and were going to fire a rocket to light up the river when one of 'em was stabbed. The other fellar didn't know when it was done. He heard a thump and thought it was his partner pushing the boat off.

"He pulled the boat over and turned around to take hold of his partner, and the other man was hanging over the stern of the boat, with his head and shoulders under water and his helmet gone. So this fellar in the boat comes up to tell us to get back out of there. We hadn't been across very long and he knew about where to find us. He did, too. So when he'd told us all about it, the *vice-feldwebel*—he's the guy in the captain's uniform, he's an Austrian—said to go out and set up the blue light. It had a time fuse on it, so we could set it and not be around when it went off. It burned blue, and meant that we'd have to stay on the American side until the next night. We burned one like it a couple of times before when we was so far in that we couldn't get back before daylight. All the guns and listening posts on the bank knew we were out and they wouldn't fire if they heard anything, or if they happened to see men in American clothes on their side all of a sudden. That was our 'gate,' they called it.

"Well, when the blue flare burned, the gate was closed and the guns could shoot at anything they heard. Well, the light went up all right, because we could hear 'em rushing out to look at it and ask what it meant. We was captured then, and was in the cellar being searched. It was our fault we were caught. We knew there were troops there, along that wall, and we had no business to stop so long. But

the *vicefeldwebel* was listening to this here man that came up from the river, you see."

"Does this agree with your information, Lieutenant?" asked the major.

"Perfectly," said Sewell. "Lipp was in the boat when we heard Sheehan popping off about something. The Boche heard him, too, and pulled back the boat with Lipp in it. He must have stabbed the man and taken his helmet, then put it on himself as a partial disguise."

"It would make him look like a German in the dark, and yet wouldn't qualify him for a shooting detail if he was captured," observed the captain.

"Then the Germans on the other side must have heard us too," went on Sewell, "but thought we were their own patrol coming home. If they saw us, they thought the same thing."

"No," said the prisoner, "you couldn't leave a thing like that. We had a special way we went, and if we didn't go that way, we'd get shot. If they saw you, they'd have hammered you."

"I guess they didn't see us then," said Sewell. "There was a man that we captured that was supposed to shoot flares, but he shot 'em all into the ground. He was drunker than a fiddler's moll. We tried to bring him back, but—er—hum—it wasn't successful. Say, about that boat, what were all those ropes and things on it for?"

"Oh," said the prisoner, "it was pulled back and forth by a pulley along the first cable. It was left on the American side, but the two men on guard were supposed to pull it clear of the bank if the Americans started shooting near it or if they heard an American patrol coming. If we were chased, we could jump into it and either be pulled right back across the stream, or else they could pull a rod that released the cable and we'd go downstream with the current where it was dark or to escape fire if the Americans were shooting on where the boat had gone.

"The banks there make a shadow that can't be lit up unless a flare is fired from the water's edge, and the man that fired it would likely get shot from the other bank. There was a rope on the stern you could pull the boat back by."

"That's right," said Sewell, "that's just the way things were."

"Would the general like to ask anything?" asked the major, turning to the liaison officer.

"No, no, thank you, Major," said the French officer. "No, I've been whispering a word or two to him now and then. No, he won't ask anything. It's very interesting."

More feet clattered in the passage, a man knocked, was bidden to enter and appeared, revealing himself as a doctor. With him were two stretcher bearers.

"Where's the patient, Major?" asked the doctor.

"Here," said the major, indicating the far side of the cellar where they had laid Lipp, his dripping head pillowed on a blanket. The major took the prisoner by the wrist and dragged him across the cellar.

"Look!" said the major, turning his flashlight on Lipp's pale face, "did you ever see that man before?"

The prisoner bent over with every sign of lively interest. He noted Lipp's pale face, the trickle of blood down the side of his head, and the bedraggled condition of his uniform, all gray with mud and slime, and with tufts of grass caught in the buttons, marks of his having crawled along the bank.

"I never seen him before," said he. "Maybe he's from one of the other patrols."

"Take this jerry away," said the major, waving his hand. "I'd like to hear more from him, about how it feels to fight against his own countrymen and all that, but not now. Can you bring this officer back to life, doctor?"

"I guess so," said the doctor, who had knelt beside Lipp and was rummaging in his professional bag. "We'll let him smell a little ammonia. Stand back, now, let's have air."

"Yes, get back," said the major.

"Everybody back and not let him see you."

Shortly there was a smell of ammonia, a cough or two, and the doctor's voice in encouraging tones.

"Wake up, old fellar," urged the doctor. "There, you're all right. Here, breathe deep now. There you are, all hunky-dory! Sure, wake up and hear revelry blow!"

"Know me?" asked the major. "Major Favil. How do you feel, Lieutenant?"

"Where am I?" the others heard Lipp ask weakly.

"You're safe in F company's P. C. How do you feel?"

"I'm a little dizzy. How did I get back?"

"We don't know," answered the major. "You were found on our side of the river bank."

"I must have got in the boat," said Lipp. "I was in the boat and all of a sudden it started across river with me. There were two jerries pulling it. I got in the water and held on. When they climbed in the boat I socked one with a trench knife. They said they were going to shoot a flare. I got his helmet."

He paused as if to rest. There was no other sound save the men breathing, and the clank of the French general's gas mask as he leaned across the table in his interest.

"Well?" prompted the major.

"Then the German patrol came back. I followed them up the bank a way and tried to take prisoners, but couldn't. I knifed three of them. Then I went down, cut loose their boat and took it down river with me. I was going to try to get it across and into the canal. That's all I remember. There was heavy firing going on."

"You don't remember how you got across the river?" asked the major.

"Yes, I do now," said Lipp, slowly. "I remember now. I plunged in and swam. I was nearly exhausted, must have fainted when I got on this side!"

"That how you got your wounds? You're all banged up."

"Oh, no," said Lipp. He paused. "I got those in the fight with the German patrol."

The silence was now heavier than before. No one dared breathe. The liaison officer whispered raspingly to the general.

"Very good," said the major finally, "take him away."

The stretcher bearers lifted Lieutenant Lipp to the stretcher and carried him out. Still no one spoke. The patrol began to think of hot coffee, dry clothes, and their bunks. They were cold and sleepy, and the purport of all this conversation was beyond them.

The French liaison officer stepped forward and saluted the major.

"Major," he began, "on behalf of the general I would like to ask the name of the officer who has just gone out. The general wishes to recommend that his gallantry be cited in army orders of the day."

"Very kind of him," said the major, "but I think it would be misplaced. I've had my eye on Lieutenant Lipp for some time. He has too many hair-raising experiences that nobody else knows about. I thought for a while he was mixed up with the Boche, but I guess not. Well, he'll go out to hospital and that will save a row over getting him relieved."

"I don't think he's yellow," said the captain. "He socked that jerry that was in the boat."

"Maybe so," said the major. "He socked the German and then skulked in the rushes the rest of the night. If he'd had any guts he'd have really followed that patrol and found out they were Americans. We were getting reports of 'em from our forward posts all night. You could hear Sheehan in Château Thierry."

"Pardon me, sir," said the French officer, "there is another officer. If the major would tell me his name, perhaps—"

"Oh, yes," the major swung about and looked sternly at Sewell. "You were given instructions before you left the post of command, were you not?"

"Yes, sir," said Sewell, wondering what all this meant.

"Did those instructions say anything about crossing the river?"

"Well, sir, they said not to, but—"

"They said not to. You had no authority to go. You split the patrol in two, ruined it for the mission intended for it and risked the lives of six other men. A man's life is a valuable thing, just as valuable in war as in peace. I want you to consider that you've been severely reprimanded. I had a mind to run you out of here and send you to Blois, but as long as we didn't lose any one, we'll let it go. Captain Flammarion, if you want to decorate some one, I'll recommend Sergeant Sheehan. I don't know his first name, but I can get it for you. That's all, men, you can go now."

"Gentlemen," said the captain, as the enlisted men filed out, "I was just making coffee when you came in. If you'd like to wait a second until I light another can of alcohol, I can offer you a cup. I've got something to go in it, too."

"Suits me," said the major. "Can't you open up here and let out some of this cigaret smoke?"

"Sure," said the captain.

He reached up and pulled on a cord and the corrugated iron shutter that Sewell had noticed the night before swung up, letting in a draft of fresh morning air. They could see the blue sky beyond and smell the dew and fresh green things. Distant feet crunched the stones as the patrol came out of the cellar and walked down the path toward the gate.

"The thing that puzzles me," said the captain, "is how Lipp got banged up that way and how he was brought back."

Again Sewell's heart flopped. He had kept himself in the background all during the talking to avoid answering that very question. How now could it be explained that Lieutenant Lipp had been brutally assaulted and dragged back at the stern of the boat, and this with the knowledge and consent of Lieutenant Sewell? True, he had not known it was Lipp, but he should perhaps have made a closer examination of the prisoner when he was first taken. Maybe he could just say that they had found Lipp unconscious. He cleared his throat, but from the garden came a voice that spoke clear and ringing.

"Sure I knew it was him," came a voice from the garden. "Didn't I see that big nose what he got when the light was blazing? Only one nose in the world like it there is. So many times his sister Ida would use up a yard first quality white goods in a morning. So with the piece chain what I found, out I crawled.

"Crawling I know, because I was on a patrol last winter. Then when comes another light—*dong!* Like that I hit him with the chain. Down he goes.

" 'Who's dirty kikes now?' I asks it to him.

"When we was in the river he comes to. Something he says in German.

" 'Sure,' I says, 'drink hearty.'

"And under he goes.

" 'Say something dirty kikes now!' I says, but all he could say was 'glub!'

"When he comes up he ain't saying nothings. Comes to this outfit loafers by the name Lipovitchsky, or Potowitz, or Kaiser Bill or the King of England even, then would we show them who's sergeants around here!"

The sound of feet and the voice died out in the distance. The officers all looked at the major, but none dared speak.

"I knew it all the time," said the major. "When I came over here you could hear Sheehan yelling it at the top of his lungs that he had crowned a German officer with a piece of chain and taken him single-handed. That's why I recommended him for the decoration. I've been aching to crown Lipp myself for the last month."

A Story of the Eternal Hard-Luck Man

*Punishment

By

JAMES MITCHELL CLARKE

FISH does queer things now and ag'in, an' I don't doubt but what God he tells 'em to do it. Take this sculpin, now; he was prob'ly sent to sting you as a warnin' against false pride an' wickedness. Puts me in mind of a thing that happened to me once, back in the days when I run a ship-chandler shop in Baltimore—a wonderful queer thing it was, too.

I was sittin' 'round the shop one wet winter's day, not doin' anythin' much but smoke, when in comes this queer lookin' coot, an' the other one right behind him. I was settin' with my feet up on the big round stove I had in the back of the shop, an' they banged the door to an' come right on back there where I was.

I'd got up to find out who they might be—it bein' kinda dark in the shop an' Baltimore not bein' any young ladies' seminary in them days—an' right away I could see they was foreigners. One of 'em was little an' wiry an' choc'late-colored, with funny white eyes—only not a nigger. An' the other was a big, broad chap with a curly beard an' a hook nose. I mistook him fer a Greek. They was both right friendly, especially the big one. He seemed to be laughin' the hull time so the ripples ran up an down his beard, an' I warmed up right away, though I don't go much on foreigners.

"What can I do fer you, gents," I says.

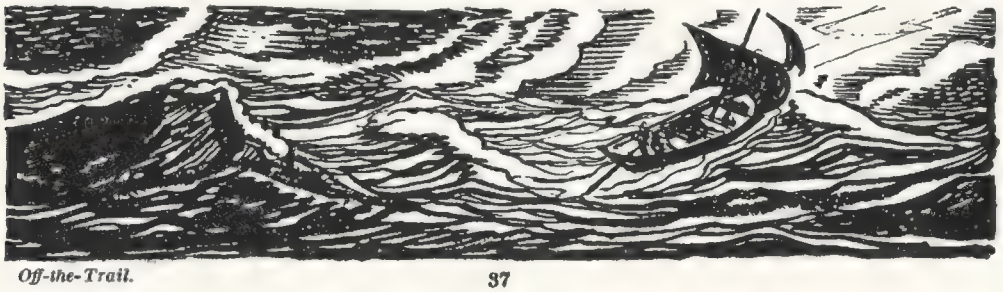
The little choc'late-colored one smiles.

"Mr. Ship-Chandler," he says, an' I noticed right away that he had a far-off voice like a talkin' machine, "my name's Hovsep, an' me an' my friend Belshar here would like to borrow your warm stove an' three glasses—one fer you, one fer me an' one fer him."

He hauls a dirty lookin' bottle out from under his peacoat an' holds it up to the light.

"We ain't stingy, mate," he goes on, "but this stuff's too hard to get for to pass around to every son-of-a-market-boat-skipper in these waterfront saloons. Fact is, they ain't no more like it in the hull world."

Belshar lets out a big chuckle an' that curly beard of his shook an' waved like it was alive. An uncommon beard it was, too—even fer them days when lots of sea-farin' men wore 'em. Looked sort of



like the pitchers you see in these here Sunday-school books.

"An' potent stuff she is too, Mr. Ship-Chandler," he says. "Bring on your glasses an' let's fall to."

"Pleased to accommodate you, gents," I says, an' went to get some pewter mugs I had an' a corkscrew, though I don't know yet how I come to take up so easy with such queer strangers.

When I came back they was tipped back in their chairs, jabberin' away in some foreign language I never heard before nor since. Hovsep was holdin' the bottle up to the light, an' they both looked so darned good-natured I felt warm an' happy right off.

"Set down, mate," says Belshar, reachin' fer the corkscrew an' passin' it over. "You never tasted nothin' like this before an' never will again."

Hovsep dropped the corkscrew an' the cork crumbled all to pieces, it was that old. Belshar held the mugs while he poured us out three fingers apiece. The stuff was clear as silver, like moonlight bein' poured out of a bottle.

"First one straight," says Hovsep. "Hernando Cortez!"

Belshar chuckled in his beard as he raised up his mug—

"An' St. Rose of Lima, God bless her!"

I didn't know what it was all about, but I took a big swallow an' after that I wouldn't have cared if they'd drunk toasts to my great aunt Samantha that was drowned six years before the Revolution tryin' to pull a calf out of the Delaware River. The stuff went down as smooth an' easy as rain off a slate roof.

When I looked around, Belshar was smilin' like a man that just remembered somethin' funny, and with that liquor in me I never turned a hair at what he said to Hovsep.

"Do you remember old Cortez the day we buried that case on the coast below Zacatula? Laughin' an' jokin' an' slappin' the Indian boys around with his scabbard. He made a bet with that fat priest Frey Hilario that he'd be back in eighteen months to drink the liquor up.

" 'There's none like it in the world,' he says. 'My father killed the man that made it on the rack, because he wouldn't tell how it was done.'

"Hernando took a lot down to the grave himself, too. But he left the liquor."

"Right, shipmate," says Hovsep. "We've drunk up more than one good man's bet because we were there an' he wasn't. Do you remember what we got out of the Roman governor's house in Marsailles?"

"A hundred years old, it was, but just as good as new."

They laughed an' laughed at that an' I was beginnin' to feel a little bit squeemish, when Belshar stopped his bellowin' enough to talk.

"It was rare," he says. "But none of that business was ever so funny as the skinny Jew we took aboard at Joppa that time. It's good enough to spill to our mate here. Fill 'em up again, Hovsep, an' let's have it."

Hovsep poured out some more of that silver liquor an' begun to talk, quiet-like, I remember; an' sometimes he used funny words that I couldn't get at, my head bein' a little bit fuzzy from the drink.

"We were lyin' in the roadstead off Joppa, waitin' for our captain who had a woman up on the hill. All the day before the lighters had gone back and forth loadin' the ship with wine, an' she was low in the water, ridin' the ground swell ugly, like the cockleshell she was. If Belshar and me had been away from home an' at sea a few years longer we'd have known better than to ship for Spain in a craft like that; especially with the —— Numidian she had for bosun. But there was little sense between us in those days.

"As I said, we were loaded heavy with wine an' waitin' for the captain to come aboard. We shot dice along the deck and Belshar found out that one of the boards was warped an' took everything off that African bosun except his earrings—which he said were gods.

"It was gettin' late and the sun clear up over the dome of the temple, when we

saw the captain shove off and come toward us, and a few minutes later another boat after him. We thought maybe it was some of the lady's family, but the captain said no, an' ordered us to get under weigh.

"We weren't quick enough though, and the other came alongside, with this

Jew standing up in her, waving his staff and yellin' that he wanted to be taken along.

"He looked like a scarecrow and almost ready to drop dead, although he couldn't have been so very old. All he had on was a ragged yellowish robe and it made him look thinner than ever. His hands were like claws and his voice sort of shook and trembled like wind. We none of us liked the look of him, though we didn't know then what he was.

"Everybody in those days knew that Jews were apt to go crazy and live alone in the deserts, eating roots and wild honey. But this blighter looked half there, even if we weren't on to what he was. He had black, big eyes, sunk deep in his head, an' they looked as if they were on fire.

"He wanted passage to Tarshish, and we couldn't tell him we weren't going there because he already knew that we were. The captain tried to talk him out of it, told him how dangerous it was and that we had a heavy cargo. It didn't do any good. He insisted that he had to go, an' would have gotten down on his knees to the captain.

"That settled it with all of us. Nobody that wasn't in trouble would be so nervous and anxious to get away as all that. We'd been in a hurry to get away from places ourselves. So the captain sold him his passage for three times what it was worth and he went below decks to sleep. By the looks of him he needed it.

"We shoved off an' hoisted all the sail we had, which wasn't a —— of a lot—one big slashin' triangle slung on a single boom—an' cleared the port. It was a bright day, with the waves coming up blue at us an' the sunlight fallin' gold on the deck. There was a good breeze following, and the city faded away, very pretty and white with its orchards sweepin' away out into the plain.

"Belshar an' I were standin' watch an watch at the steering oar, one of us sleeping while the other one worked. We slept on the deck, bein' hardy an' young in them days, long before the scurvy an' Mexican fever got us.

"Well, the mornin' went by smooth enough, but at the beginnin' of the afternoon watch Belshar woke me up an' pointed out a little black cloud way off to the north of east. The captain came up as we was lookin' at it.

" 'Looks bad to me,' he says, an' we both nodded.

"'Aw ——,' says the bosun, showin' off, 'that'll blow over. I've seen it like that lots of times.'

" 'Mister,' says the captain, 'I'll lay you this whole cargo of wine against three measly silver shekels that we have a storm before night.'

"That captain sure knew a storm from a piece of sailcloth—which the bosun didn't—because that piffling cloud grew and grew until it was a whole skyful. By four bells the wind had shifted 'round an' lifted the sea into a nasty cross-chop; and by dark there was a howlin' hurricane

whipping the water into a white lather of breaking wave-tops. I don't believe I've seen anything like it before or since.

"We took down the sail an' out oars an' fought her all afternoon, Belshar an' me at the steerin' oar an' the rest rowin'. It was all we could do to keep steerageway.

"That —— African bosun was afraid an' he ripped up and down among the rowers cussin' them an' sayin' what he'd do if they slacked up just as if every poor devil there wasn't working to save his skin.

"Once when the wind shifted she got away from us and yawed almost broadside into a trough. The black devil came up to the poop, frothin' at the mouth an' callin' us dirty names in half a dozen different languages. Belshar told him that if he came within two cubits of us he'd put a knife through him.

"He had reason to be afraid, though. You know how the Mediterranean can stand on its head; an' the combers were so close together that they might easy have broken the back of a better ship than ours. Between the constant pitching of the boat and some wine-casks that got loose an' went smashin' around the hold, the planks of her began to work loose. Every time we met a wave the top curled right up over the bow an' came down on top of us, so we were gettin' it from above an' below.

"By night we were like drowned rats—the oarsmen gone in the back and loins, an' the black dog of a bosun whimperin' prayers to his earring gods. Just 'after dark there was a little lull an' we got out the cables and frapped her 'round, passin' the lashin's 'round an' 'round her just forward of the mast where she was sprung the worst. Then we tried to go on, but it wasn't any use. The captain even had us throw over some of his precious cargo, but nothin' we did seemed to help. The rowers were gibbering in their seats, an' the black shook all over as if he had the ague.

"After a few hours of pullin' like fools and gettin' no place, the captain, who was a religious man except in business matters, came over an' shouted in our ears to ask us if we didn't think that the storm was caused by some god who was angry at us, an' that prayers an' sacrifices would be a good thing.

"We were about done for anyway, an' figured it wouldn't do any harm to try a sacrifice, so we said that we'd heave the bosun overboard an' the captain could go ahead with his prayers. But he said that wouldn't do at all. The crew would never stand for it.

"Then I suddenly thought of the Jew who had been sleeping below decks like a dead man—though why he wasn't seasick all over the place is more than we ever knew. Of course we couldn't sacrifice him just for no other reason except that it might be a good thing. But along with the Jew an' his burning eyes, there had come into my mind a stunt that I hadn't seen tried since I was a lad.

"I spilled the scheme to Belshar and the captain, and they laughed like loons until a wave came along and filled 'em with salt water.

" 'His name's Jonah,' I ended up, 'which means a dove, in Hebrew—though maybe he isn't one. An' he looks like he thought sailors were honest men. He'll never get wise.'

"So the captain went below an' brought up Jonah, all sleepy an' shiverin' in his ragged robe, while I went around among the rest of the crew an' put them wise. Belshar knocked the bosun over the head so that he wouldn't be in the way.

" 'Men,' says the captain, 'somebody on this ship has caused this storm by making his god angry at him. Is it fair an' right that we should all be drowned like rats because of one man?'

" 'No!' yells Belshar, loud enough to be heard on shore.

" 'Then let us draw lots so that we can find out who it is an' get rid of him. The man who gets the chip with the cross marked on it is the guilty one.'

"I'd found a lot of little sandalwood chips an' passed 'em around among the crew, including the captain an' Jonah.

The men already had their instructions, an' as each one got his billet he looked at it solemn an' stood fast. Belshar's beard was dancin' a jig up an' down his chest, he was havin' that hard a time not to laugh.

"Well, when I got to this man Jonah an' handed him his chip, he turned sort of a sick gray, an' his mouth began to work. His Adam's apple went up an' down an' for about a minute he just stood there an' quivered, the scaredest Jew you ever saw in your life.

"Then he snapped out of it. His body straightened an' his eyes took on a far-away look as he stepped up to the captain an' held out the chip. His hand didn't shake at all.

"I gave the high-sign to the men, an' they threw their chips overboard, tryin' hard not to laugh because all those pieces of wood had crosses on 'em an' we couldn't afford to have evidence lyin' around.

" 'Where do you come from an' what have you done that you bring this punishment upon yourself?' the captain asked him.

" 'I am Jonah, an Hebrew. My god is the Lord Jehovah, God of battles, the true and only God. He is wroth with me because I have obeyed not his commands.'

"There was something about the way he said it that scared the whole bunch of us, even Belshar here, an' the captain asked him what we'd better do to save ourselves.

" 'Throw me into the sea, for it is against me alone that the Lord has sent this tempest.'

"He looked so sort of grand standing there, tall an' lean an' straight, with the wind blowin' his wet robe about him an' his eyes blazin' out from deep in his head an' his voice booming above the storm, that it all sort of got under our skins.

"The captain says to me:

" 'My God, we can't do this—even if he is a Jew an' crazy as ——. Let's try to row her ashore!'

"I glanced around at the men, an' they all looked sort of sheepish an' half sorry. Jonah was standing by the mast with his arms folded, looking off into the darkness. I nodded my head an' the captain gave orders.

"We pulled for all we were worth for another hour, but it was no go. The storm got even worse, an' the old ship felt like she was goin' to pieces any minute. She was on her beam ends most of the time an' the lightnin' was strikin' all around so bright we could see one another's faces by it.

"The black bosun woke up and started to whimper, an' that set the men off again. They stopped rowing and started yelling at the captain to have Jonah thrown over. He hesitated a minute an' then told off Belshar an' me to do the job, us two bein' responsible in a way.

" 'You two haven't got any gods anyway,' he says, 'so it won't hurt your black souls if we're in the wrong.'

" 'We hate like —— to do this, mister,' says Belshar as we came up to Jonah. 'Captain's orders.'

" 'Cast me into the sea,' he answered, calm as a rock. 'I have betrayed my God.'

"So we picked him up by the legs and arms—he didn't weigh any more than a child—an' gave him a toss out into the water. When the lightnin' flashed again there was nothing where he had been but a big smother of foam among the waves.

"An' I'm a son-of-a-gun if the storm didn't go down within half an hour."

When the Magic-Makers Clash on the Elephant Trails

The Were-Tiger

By LYMAN BRYSON

WHEN the new soothsayer came into Ban Dong from somewhere out of the west he brought new ideas. And new ideas are always evil. Any good Moi knows that without needing an old chief to tell him so and chant the laws of the *bidouway* to prove it. Soothsayers are generally useful in discouraging innovations. They know how to throw a pioneer into a shuddering terror by hinting what will happen to him if he presumes to think and asks questions about the what or the why of something all his ancestors have done before him. But this soothsayer, this intruder who was not a Moi at all, but a Shan or a Laos tribesman probably, who came into Ban Dong as a fugitive, was full of dangerous differences.

It was Blay, the son of Tu-op, who met him at the edge of the clearing. Blay saw him standing, very tired, beside a tree trunk and thought at first his sagging body was only a heavy vine. When the stranger moved Blay made him step forward into the moonlight and be examined. He had no weapons; outside of a breech-cloth there was nothing on his body but scratches from the jungle thorns, and his ribs stuck out like the welts of heavy wounds. He begged for water and rice. Blay thought him a rather interesting capture and took him home to show to Tu-op.

The man fell twice trying to clamber up the notched bamboo into the house and threw himself at Tu-op's feet while that ancient hunter smoked and regarded him.

"I think it is a lizard, not a man," said Tu-op to his son, slyly. "He can not go but on four feet."

The refugee shuddered and waited. But after he had been fed three times

he could stand erect, beyond a doubt, and cast a very insolent eye on these strangers who had taken him in.

The Ban Dong elders advised Tu-op to cast him into the jungle again. He was of an unknown tribe; bewitched probably, and for that reason wandering so far abroad in the forest. No good could come of keeping him. And Tu-op, for that was his habit, decided to protect the stranger because the others were against him.

Not until he was fat from eating Tu-op's rice, cooked in bamboo joints by Tu-op's lame and beautiful wife, and also from sitting from one sunset to another in the corner of the house, did Nuan, for that was the name they gave him in derision, admit he was a soothsayer.

He made this boast in answer to a repeated question as to why he was afraid of the French, the strange white men who came into the forest at times and talked weird doctrines about "protection" and "tribute" and "loyalty" and "government." He had angered the French white men, he said, by casting a spell against them.

He had thwarted them in their devilish plans for getting possession of all free lands of the people. He had stirred up a flock of spirits against them in the jungle paths so they lost their way and almost perished of thirst and fear, and had to turn back again. He had served them with admirable disasters. The Mois would not have known what he meant by such white man's words as "police" and "felony" and "opium smuggling" and others which he knew much too well; so it was sensible of him not to mention them. He was a wizard, he said, and a mighty one.

"We have one soothsayer in Ban Dong now," Tu-op commented calmly, "and that is too many."

His son, who was sitting on his heels in the corner shadow, stirred and made a noise in his throat at this but Tu-op pretended not to hear. The boy had an eye on a lissome, bronze-bodied girl who called the Ban Dong soothsayer father. Naturally his opinion in such matters would be worthless.

"If the men of Ban Dong," said the newcomer, "are not satisfied with the wizard they have now, they should get a new one. I will remain and see if they do not need me."

Tu-op laughed at this until his back hurt and his pipe went out. Blay, his son, repeated it that night to the girl's father however, and the girl's father, old Irap, who had never dreamed that his position as wizard in Ban Dong would be questioned until one of his own sons grew up, swore fearfully. He took hold of the post of his own house when Blay told him and shook it so hard in his sacred wrath that his two pigs were disturbed under the platform on which the dwelling rested and went squealing into the edge of the forest.

"Your pigs—your pigs!" cried Blay, for he was interested more in Irap's fortune than in his disposition.

"He shall be blasted and burned—I'll dry his tongue in his throat—I'll put his thumbs in a split bamboo and let the lizard spirits disembowel him!"

"Your pigs are running away, revered parent!" shouted Blay.

"My pigs go to mate with the wild boars," answered Irap loftily. "They are the pigs of a great sorcerer. And this pig of a stranger—this crocodile's filth—coming here with his tricks to take an honest man's rice out of his mouth—"

"I do not believe he has any tricks, revered parent," said Blay, trying to soothe him.

Old Irap paused. There was a fleck of foam in the corner of his betel-stained mouth where one sharpened tooth protruded like a fang, and his eyes rolled.

"Has he tricks? Does he know any medicine? We shall see. We shall see."

He turned his back on Blay, muttering savagely, and scrambled up the bamboo into his house. He must have had a great deal to talk to his daughter about that night, for, although Tu-op's son waited there for an hour, she did not so much as come to the edge of the platform.

II

THE old chief of Ban Dong agreed, when Irap formally demanded it, that there should be a trial of strength between Irap and the stranger. The chief was worried somewhat by the presence of two soothsayers in his village. Who knew what might happen if they should get their incantations mixed? The forest spirits might be puzzled to know the wishes or the intentions of Ban Dong men, and be angry with confusions. The chief had no use for the stranger, of course, but he thought Irap could demolish him and then there would be no longer any reason for not driving him away. Even Tu-op would scarcely hold out for his guest if Irap showed him to be either an impostor or a weak magician. Tu-op was impious, but he was not a fool; he would never be friends with a beaten man.

A grand butchery of buffaloes and opening of rice-wine jugs was ordered for the next night of the full moon. The challenge to the stranger was conveyed from the house of old Irap in terms so injurious that the stranger, not having a full vocabularly of the Moi tongue, was tempted into replying in some barbarous jargon of the west, Laos perhaps. It had a sulphurous sound, and the messenger who received it shielded his face with his arm for fear it was a blistering spell.

To show his contempt for the powers of Nuan, the stranger, old Irap was willing to practise his own magic in the open clearing. He counted on his masterly control of the spirits of air and forest, light and darkness, earth and sky—a control so complete that he could challenge them all without the protection of a roof, where there was no smoke to thicken his incantations and where the buffalo heads that dripped black blood had to be hung on saplings instead of on the consecrated door posts.

The whole village of Ban Dong was there, even the woman who had once been Tu-op's wife, the real mother of the valorous Blay, in fact, who had rejected Tu-op and gone home to her mother because of his well-known impiety. She was there to see Tu-op's guest lose face forever; perhaps even Tu-op himself might get a share of the contemptuous jeering. Little Mungye and the other elephant hunters were ranked on either side of the old ch ef and they squatted on their heels so their women folk could see over their heads. They all made a solid fence around the magician's circle. The unholy Nuan could not escape when it was over.

To propitiate a spirit in order to have his blessing on a hunt is a simple affair; it scarcely takes the special training of a sorcerer to do that. But to summon an intimate demon out of the spirit world and compel him to manifest himself as a proof of your power is a serious business. Even Irap very seldom tried it. He owned a demon, a fearful creature who had been bestowed on him for future use by his father when Irap was a crawling infant, but for years he had not disturbed that demon's rest.

To help him with smoke and music he chose two ancients who had amateur claims to magic of their own. One kept the choking fumes pouring up from a charcoal fire by putting on green rattan slips. The other beat the long drum with his hands.

The new soothsayer sat opposite the old one, clad in a robe which he had made secretly for this night, a robe with great sleeves and loose folds around his waist. He watched the preparations with a silent supercilious air, and when the drum began to sway Irap and the crowd in a rhythmic hunching of their bare shoulders, Nuan sat straight, resisting. Tu-op, the impious, was somewhere on the edge of the spectators' circle, prowling restlessly.

Irap swayed his body at his hips, back and forth, faster and faster. With an abrupt cry he clapped his hands above his head and began to chant. He called upon his demon to come, to come up out of the fires and winds of the spirit world, to possess him and speak with the authority

of irresistible power. He whirled until his hair was loosened and swung about his mumbling head. The people of Ban Dong, swaying to the drum, had their eyes fixed on him and their ears were filled with his shrill singing.

The drum stopped on a half-beat of its swift cadence. The people were stiffened. The only sound was the sputter of the fires.

Irap had thrown himself forward on his face and lay twitching for a moment, possessed of his demon. Then he lifted his head with solemn slowness. His eyes were turned upward so that only their whites showed in the dim illumination of the fire; the demon must have given him sight for he pointed a shaking arm at Nuan, the intruder.

A guttural voice, certainly not his own, came from his throat.

"There is death for Ban Dong," said the demon, through Irap's lips, "there is death in the presence of the stranger. He is vile; he has the blood of the western tribes; he plots destruction. The spirits are angry with the men of Ban Dong for feeding him. Unless he is driven out there will be death—sorrow and death!"

Irap collapsed upon his face again and a long shuddering sigh ran through the people.

Nuan only smiled.

Little Mungye and two warriors stirred and stood up from their heels, grasping their spears. The old chief, shaking his head to clear his mind of Irap's powerful spell, called for quiet.

"We have permitted a test," he said. "Let the stranger do what he can."

Nuan stood up and stepped into the center of the circle.

"Listen, O men of Ban Dong!" he cried. "There are many demons and many gods. But there is one god greater than all, greater than Nget-Ngwal of the elephants. He lives above the moon—"

Nuan pointed straight into the air, and so sharp was the command in his shrill voice that every eye in the crowd was turned toward the heavens where the round moon hung in the blackness.

"His name is Buddh'," cried Nuan, "and he is worshiped by mighty men. Watch for him; watch, for he will give a sign to his servant."

For a long time the fascinated crowd kept their gaze turned sharply upward until their eyes were tired.

"Watch his servant now!" cried Nuan, and on his wrist they saw a green feather. It was a parrakeet's feather resting lightly on Nuan's brown wrist, from which he had drawn back the wide sleeve of his robe.

He began to sing in some weird language of his own, keeping his eyes not on the feather, but rolled up toward the sky. They all watched with him, expecting a portent from this god Buddh' who might possibly be a very mighty spirit in the west.

Then Nuan tossed up his arm and stood still.

There was a flash of green above his head and a green parrakeet, twisting its beak and blinking at the crowd out of a canny eye, sat on his bare wrist. Out of nowhere! Grown from the feather! A murmur went through the Ban Dong people as they bent their necks, sore from staring upward, and turned their attention to the magic bird.

"A sign!" shouted Nuan. "The holy one sends a bird!" Then Nuan, the stranger, knowing he had them for the moment under his spell, did a bold and terrible thing. "The bird of the great god," he said in a low voice that made them lean forward to hear, "has the power to know the mighty beasts and men. He knows the Great Lord, the yellow beast who may not be called by his name. He knows him, the Killer, even when he lives among us as a man."

The people stirred uneasily, for even that much mention of a tiger is dangerous liberty which the yellow one who comes at night may overhear and come to punish.

"He knows the Killer even when he lives among us in the form of a man," said Nuan with an rising stridency in his voice. "He knows—he knows— Speak, O holy bird! Is there one among us?"

The bird fluttered on his wrist.

The invocation of the tiger was more horrible to the Ban Dong people than a demon who only cursed from the bloody lips of an old wizard like Irap. They shrank back from Nuan and his bird and looked at each other. Some of the women on the outer edge caught up their children stealthily and hurried away home.

"Is there one among us," yelled Nuan, "who is a Killer but goes on two feet like a man? Betray him to us, O bird of the great spirit."

He cast the fluttering parrakeet in the air. Like a green explosion it flashed across the ring. Old Irap, out in front of the squatting rows, fell over backward in astonishment when the bird fastened its talons in his hair, screaming like a devil.

The Ban Dong people ran in all directions. They fell over each other and cursed and bumped and rolled. Little Mungye knocked down a sapling that held a sacrificial head and got the bloody buffalo's flesh on the small of his back. He howled in terror and ran for his house, trampling two old women on the way.

The circle of light was empty except for Nuan standing in triumph over old Irap who writhed, fighting with the bird, and except for two others who had not run. The old chief sat in his place blanched with fright but incapable of running and deserted by the bearers of his chair. And there was Tu-op, calm and staunch, although inwardly disturbed.

Blay, Tu-op's valiant son, had fled with the first but he turned to look; when he perceived that his father was still there he crept back and took his place at his father's side, his heavy knife unslung and his bare toes dug firmly into the dirt.

Nuan laughed an unholy laugh and called to his bird. The green demon left the fallen Irap and went back to the great wizard's wrist.

"Behold, O Chief," said Nuan.

He cast the bird into the air again and it circled upward in great sweeps, straight up into the heavens. They watched it until they could see nothing more. Then a speck came floating down and the little green feather was there again on Nuan's wrist.

The great wizard came over toward Tu-op, his protector, expecting good wishes and the acknowledgment of his victory. But there was something strange in Tu-op's manner. He walked toward his chief.

"Old Irap is not a Killer," said Tu-op. "He is a man and a friend of men. He is a foolish wizard perhaps, but a man."

The chief shook his palsied head and wished in his heart that some one else were judge of the tribal laws for a day or so.

"Besides," insisted Tu-op, standing before him with respect and firmness, "Irap has lived among us for many, many seasons, and never since I was a man has the Great Lord of the forest taken a Ban Dong life. If Irap is a—a tiger—" Tu-op spoke the fearful word almost carelessly—"where has he killed?"

What Tu-op said was the truth, and since the old chief had no handy law that could be quoted in the premises, the question rested. Irap shut himself up in his house mourning his defeat, and the intruder strutted around the village and was much smiled at because every one was sick with fear of him.

III

THE new soothsayer had no need to be the guest of Tu-op now. He was given a house of his own, and was considering what wife he would take among the young girls in the tribe. Blay saw him one afternoon watching old Irap's daughter when she dipped water from the river. She was a gay child and was singing happily as she stood in the brown water where the sun cast reflections of tangled skeins of light on the brownness of her skin. She had a giddy red flower above her ear, woven into her black hair, and her thin wet *sampot* clung to her round limbs. Blay saw Nuan's eyes wrinkled up at her beauty, and he added

murder to his thoughts of the intruder. If he had supposed that any ordinary knife could hack the sorcerer's neck he would have ended the business with praiseworthy dispatch.

The attitude of Tu-op continued to be queerly uncertain. He protested whenever any one would listen to him that he did not believe in the least that poor old Irap was a were-tiger; in fact he did not believe that such a thing as a were-tiger existed.

"A man is a man and a beast is a beast—in this life," said Tu-op.

But he appeared still to be friends with Nuan and supported the new ideas which were brought forward by that disturbing element.

A great issue came when there was talk of an elephant drive. The auguries which had always been trusted under Irap's guidance were tried by the chief and presaged evil. Nuan laughed and said he knew by his own spells that there was a mighty hunting in the forest for Ban Dong men, if on his advice the *pakams* dared go out and try.

Tu-op, mightiest *pakam* of them all, although he had not bestrode an elephant's neck since the day of the old elephant with the twisted tail, nodded his head and agreed. Beyond any question, he thought, there was good hunting.

The matter was much discussed along the river and on the porches of an evening. Little Mungye, with regrettable disloyalty, since he had been a follower of Tu-op's, remarked that of course Tu-op would agree with the new ideas—he was *biol*, drunk, with vanity and impious recklessness. Little Mungye was making quite a speech on the subject of Tu-op when he caught sight of Blay eying him over the shoulder of a friend and he choked on his peroration.

Since Irap would not come forth to defend the ancient faiths and the new sorcerer had the *pakams* miserably worried, the chief declared that the hunt should be tried.

"Make your propitiations before Nget-Ngwal," he said helplessly, "and perhaps he will permit this new god to bless your hunting."

The night before the procession was to start off into the jungle Tu-op had a long talk with Blay.

"When you are ancient as I am," he said, "and have given over the glory of catching elephants to your son, you have many hours for thinking. I have listened to the wild talk of this Nuan—"

"He is a crocodile," said Blay, shamelessly interrupting his father.

"—and I have believed very little of what he said," Tu-op concluded, overlooking in his kindness the impoliteness of the boy. "But he comes from the west and no doubt he tells truly what men in the west believe. There are many men in the world, no doubt—not counting white men and the French. If they all hunt elephants and call on different spirits for help—"

"But do they all *catch* their elephants when they try?" demanded Blay, conscious of his own prowess.

"Hold your peace and listen, child! If they call on different gods and all the gods answer, then perhaps it is after all the skill and bravery of men that count for most in a victorious hunting."

"Ah—" Blay, whose mind was clear and simple because he was a good brave man without the poison of doubt which suffering had injected into his father's soul, breathed an acknowledgment of the skill and bravery of men. Otherwise he had no idea what his father was talking about.

"Now listen," continued Tu-op, his brown brows wrinkled terribly in the effort to think, "you must go into this hunt tomorrow and you must not come home until you have tamed a worthy elephant. That will prove that the old auguries were useless."

"It will prove also that this stranger Nuan is a better soothsayer than our Irap," protested Blay.

He spat a scarlet stream of betel-juice through the crack in the floor and ruminated fiercely.

"Most of all," replied Tu-op, smiling,

"it will prove that my son is a *pakam* worthy of me."

"*Yu-ne Kal*" Blay agreed. "Yes, that will be good," he lost his attempt at thinking in a bright dream of gray tuskers caught and led in triumph back to Ban Dong. "*Yu-ne Kal*"

MOSTLY because of Blay's indomitable fervor and his natural cunning, the hunt went well. When they first marched out of the Ban Dong clearing, with Blay ahead on his own great hunting elephant and his rope holder clinging to their charger's rump, the *pakams* were in a mood of restless uncertainty. If there had been an unlucky incident to fix their fears they might have turned and scattered back for home, and the troublesome Nuan would have been finished then, as he deserved.

Blay kept them going and they found a wild herd four days later in the deep green forest. Blay himself rode down a fine young bull and snared him by the hind foot and tied him to a tree. That success, which made a vast noise in the forest, scared the rest of the wild herd into two days' running but it gave complete courage to the hunters. They chased the herd and got one more, a young female, and turned toward Ban Dong contented.

Within a day's journey of home, when they were beginning to feel safe and could taste already the celebrating rice-wine and roasted flesh that would greet them, they slept one night by the river.

In the middle of that night little Mungye, who was out as picket to watch the new captures, came creeping in to where the others were sleeping, so sick with terror that he went four-legged like a monkey, and whispered that two yellow eyes were looking at him from the brush.

They were all awakened and they built up the fire and sang and pounded their knives together and shouted prayers to Nget-Ngwal, god of the elephants, forgetting of course that they were for the time under the protection of a new god named Buddh'. They made such a racket that the elephants could not hear anything else. What they could not do was to change the scent of tiger on the air.

It drifted in, rank and terrible, to where the elephants huddled. Blay's own beast, canny and well trained as he was, lifted his trunk and trumpeted in alarm. The two new ones, tied between seasoned females, bucked and pulled at their fastenings. Blay went in among them and tried to soothe them. But his own beast knew there was a strange tremble in the voice of his master and paid no attention. They began to sway, like men in a dance. The *pakams* thought after a long time that their noise had been effective and paused. In the silence, when the jungle seemed for a moment to be holding its moist breath, there was a sound—a throaty *purrrrrrr*.

The elephants broke. Tearing the two new captures out of their moorings, they went in a compact mass through the tangled lianas, over young bamboos, crashing trees aside, dragging long streamers of rattan behind them, plunging blindly into the darkness.

The Ban Dong *pakams* kept up their noises then and their fires until the sun came up. Wearily they took up the pursuit, knowing they might have to go on for days and end up empty-handed.

It had in truth been a number of years since a tiger had come so directly across the path of Ban Dong men. Ban Dong had been lucky. Other villages along the river, especially those farther into the northern hills, might lose a pig or even a buffalo calf sometimes. One man in the north two years ago had lost his daughter to the Great Lord, it was said, but gossip added that the daughter was worthless anyway, being impudent to her parents. The tiger was still spoken of with ceremonial respect as the Great Lord but he had not been a present trouble to Bang Dong.

The *pakams* discussed all this as they plodded through the damp undergrowth following the broad track of the elephants, and they speculated as to the reason for this change of fortune. Blay

knew why it was and said so. It was the wrath of their own gods; and surely Nget-Ngwal had reason enough to be wrathful since they had shamed him before this stranger's spirit Buddh'.

Blay made his opinions seem more reasonable by being first to come upon his own elephant. He saw him ploughing along sullenly and called the command to halt. When the beast paused uncertain, and most of the hunters would have been afraid to approach him without some further seductive conversation, Blay walked up and told his elephant to hold down his trunk for a stirrup. Once up there on the great square head Blay could control not only his own but the other elephants. They were all subdued soon enough, all but the two newly captured ones who never were recovered.

The disappointed hunt came back to the village. They had chosen Blay for spokesman and he went to the chief in the midst of the homecoming feast and made their accusation.

"We were deceived, O mighty judge," he said. "We were told by this false soothsayer, this Nuan, that the auguries were good for hunting. And then when we had captured two fine elephants, the finest that have ever been in the hands of Ban Dong men, we were stalked by the Great Lord at night. We were put in fear for our lives and we lost the catch. Withdraw your protection from this stranger who gives dark counsel and disturbs the gods of our tribes."

Nuan, resplendently clothed and smiling still his imperturbable contempt for enemies, waved an arm.

"Enough, son of Tu-op," he commanded. "Did you see my lord the tiger?"

"No," answered Blay with a shudder, "I smelled him and my elephant smelled him also."

Nuan smiled more widely, his wrinkled face thrust forward with a hateful leer of insolence.

"It was not a tiger," he said.

"But the smell of the Great Lord was in the air."

"It was not the Great Lord," insisted Nuan. "It was man who goes as a beast by night to make his kill."

They all crouched, ready to flee if Nuan should begin a spell. But the intruder was subtle. He asked in a sleepy voice:

"Has any man or woman of Ban Dong seen the ancient Irap while the hunt was out? Has he been seen?"

They shook their heads and nudged one another.

"I have spoken," said Nuan and left the assembly.

IV

"THERE can not be such a thing as a man who walks as a tiger," said Tu-op to his son. Tu-op's mother, who sat in the corner of the house, shook her ancient head and spat, missing the crack between the bamboos in her palsied weakness.

"No," she snorted, "but there are! I have always known of them."

Tu-op's wife shook her head too, but in gentle trouble. She was worried for the sake of Blay whom she loved as if he had been her own instead of only her stepson.

"A man's soul may pass into the body of a tiger when he has died, perhaps," continued Tu-op, speculating in his calm way, "and that would be a reward for a life of bravery. But a man is a man and a beast is a beast—in this life certainly."

Blay choked with the thing he had to utter.

"Nuan, the vile, has told Mungye and the others a tale of following tracks from the forest into the village!"

"Did any other man see them?" asked Tu-op.

"No," said Blay. "But does that make Nuan less bold? He says that he saw them—tracks of the Great Lord—coming in from the forest and ending by the ladder of Irap's house."

Tu-op smiled.

"You are the one who should know, my son, what tracks go in and out from the porch of that house."

"She is like a bird that trembles in the eye of a snake," replied Blay. "She hopes to save her father from this horrible death. And Nuan says—from Mungye, I have these lies—that he followed the tracks at night from the edge of the clearing to Irap's house and they were fresh tracks, hot with the touch of the Great Lord's feet."

"And Nuan says he followed close?" Tu-op laughed. "Does even Mungye believe that?"

"Mungye believes what he is told. And Nuan tells that he crept up to the corner of the house post and heard the voice of Irap above on the ladder calling to his girl to bring a bamboo torch. And while Irap's head was the head of a man, talking humanly to his child, the feet of Irap on the bamboo notch were the claws of a beast, and a striped tail swung back and forth and lashed the ground."

The old woman in the corner gave a hideous groan and fell over in a fit of terror. Even Tu-op fingered nervously the charm that hung on his breast. But he held obstinately to his doubts.

"I do not believe it," he muttered. "May the spirits of my father and my father's father stand by me, but I do not believe it."

There was a long scream of demented fear. It seemed at first that it came from within the house but, as they sat like images with contorted mouths, they realized that it was out in the village. Blay scrambled to his feet and unslung his knife and was down the ladder before his father could join him. But Tu-op went with equal boldness along the piles of house platforms where women were yelling and men were jumping down, toward the center of Ban Dong. Before the chief's house they saw a girl, one of his daughters, lying senseless on the ground. Near-by, when they searched with blazing bamboo torches, they saw the broad tracks, half-obliterated by the bloody path of a kill the Great Lord had dragged behind.

"He came over the stockade," said the chief's girl, when they had brought her back to life again. "One jump over, and he took a calf—like that!"

She tried to show how the calf had its throat torn in one paw's swing and how its body had been carried in the tiger's mouth.

Almost all of Ban Dong was there, crowded close around her. Tu-op drew Blay aside.

"Go now," he whispered, "to Irap's house and get him away into the forest. Go northward—all night. Along the river. I will do what may be done." And Blay ran.

When, led by Nuan, the *pakams* surrounded Irap's house at dawn they found only his daughter huddled by her dead fire, weeping and dumb.

V

AFTER several days, the village discovered that Blay, son of Tu-op, was missing as well as old Irap and they knew at once he had been eaten by the tiger.

"Eaten by Irap, the tiger," they said.

They were disgusted with Tu-op because he would not go through any mourning feasts for the lost Blay. His impiety was incorrigible. He did worse. He took Irap's daughter into his house where she was safe from those who said a tiger father would beget a tiger child.

And out of the jungle where Irap had buried himself the Great Lord continued to come. Once, seven nights after the chief's daughter had seen him leap the stockade, he carried off another buffalo calf. Twice his tracks were seen along the river although nothing was missing at dawn. Little Mungye, whose stories had never before been so fervently believed, said he saw him on the other side of the river, standing with his body among the vines, his head thrust out toward the town, his eyes glaring and his lips a-snarl. The expression on his face, Mungye added, was very much like the habitual expression of old Irap.

In this crisis, when the town was paralyzed, the new wizard Nuan and the old

scoffer Tu-op found themselves again in agreement as to what could be done.

"Traps are as good against a man-tiger as against the tiger when he is his lordly self," said Nuan.

Tu-op smiled and said—

"Yes, certainly, if they are *good* traps."

They deferred to Tu-op's judgment about the traps. It had been so long since a tiger had included Ban Dong in his hunting grounds, that only a *pakam* with gray hair and several stiff white hairs on his chin, some one incredibly experienced, could presume to know how to go about it.

Tu-op selected the places in the forest where pits were to be dug, showed them how to build light shielding walls of *nipa* stalks and how to bait with carrion of dog.

Mungye made several impudent inquiries about these pits, suggesting that they were exactly like elephant traps except for the stink of carrion. Tu-op answered him severely. When after two days the Great Lord, or the ancient Irap, or whoever it was, leaped into one of the pits, took the bait and leaped out again, Tu-op was compelled to think harder. He deigned to consult Nuan, and the soothsayer told him of how they caught tigers in the west—with timber cages and trap doors.

It was easy. Just build a strong stockade and cover it with logs, put a ripe dead dog inside, prop the door up with a stick which the beast must knock over when he gets in to the bait, and there you are. Only what Nuan said was:

"And there you have caught Irap," and he turned away from Tu-op to leer at Irap's cringing girl. "If I had that woman," he said, "I could cure her of being a tiger's daughter. It takes a strong spell but Buddh' is great."

They built it like a rabbit trap, a few hundred paces into the jungle, and they waited while the bait got strong enough to move the nostrils of tigers in the far-off Tibet hills. They heard the beast roar once or twice and looked hopefully in their snare next morning, but nothing was there.

Tu-op came home to his house one night after moonrise. His wife was waiting patiently for him and also his mother, not so patient, but waiting because there was nothing else to do.

"Where is the girl?" he asked.

His wife, whose ways were so blameless that she seldom had need to answer his questions by scolding, sneered—

"Should I know what she does?"

Tu-op refused to sit down.

"Where is the girl?" he repeated sternly.

His mother broke forth.

"She has gone off with your mad sorcerer, of course. Hasn't he told her three times that if she will come with him he will teach her a spell that will free her from the bedevilment that has afflicted her father?"

"But does she not think of Blay—doesn't she know?"

His mother puffed out her cheeks in scorn of the simplicity of a man's thinking:

"She thinks Blay has gone and will never touch her because she is accursed. She thinks this western madman can cure her."

"But does she believe that her father is a—"

His mother laughed shrilly.

"Of course she does. Everybody does but you; and you are a great hunter but a fool!"

"Very well then," said Tu-op, shifting his knife around to have it handy on his shoulder. "I am going hunting." And he dropped down from the platform of his house to the ground silently and ran across the little moonlight space that protected him from the jungle.

VI

AS SOON as he got into the close pressing tangle of the brush Tu-op began to think. He had noticed that about himself: He jumped with his knife first and thought afterward, if at all. He believed that it was peculiar to his own nature and was ashamed to ask any other wise old men of the tribe whether they

had ever been so foolish. Thinking did not really help much. He did not know what was going on in the jungle except that his own son was there—far away, he hoped—taking care of the unlucky Irap. Irap's daughter was there, having betrayed herself simply into the hands of the tricky Nuan. And the Great Lord himself was somewhere. Thinking helped only this much: It made Tu-op see that Nuan trusted his own powers in a reckless way. He would not otherwise have ventured into the brush even for some incantation nonsense with Irap's daughter which would put her definitely under his control.

Tu-op wished he had some such confidence in himself. He took his knife in his hand to cut the lianas out of his way and to give himself the comfort of closing his fingers tightly around it. He continued to think and decided that he was a great fool. What was he going to do to find them?

He circled warily, supposing Nuan and the girl would be within safe distance of his house, if anybody could call himself safe in the brush. He came to a little open space that he knew well. Young men came there sometimes to sing songs and hear them. But Tu-op was stern toward the memories of his youth.

The fear of the Great Lord had kept the young men of Bang Dong in that night, and if all the singing maidens of the tribe had gathered there they would have found no listeners. But over in the shadow at the edge of the moonlit grassy space he saw two figures. Tu-op rubbed his eyes to see them better. Unconsciously he reached up toward the branch of a tree and swung himself to a seat whence he could see and consider.

It was Nuan the sorcerer and Irap's daughter. The blood beat in Tu-op's temples, for he loved his son and he knew that Blay felt about this girl as he himself felt about the lame woman in their house. Now the filthy stranger was holding the girl's hands and talking to her, some spell of nonsense. Should the old fool be slain thus? Or should the girl be taken home again and Nuan told to keep away at his peril? Killing was usually better. Provided, of course, that the sorcerer would be killed with an ordinary man's good knife. Tu-op thought a strong swing would probably cut through any charm that Nuan knew.

While he considered, the girl, facing toward him, moved suddenly. He could not see why unless perhaps she had spied him hanging there in the tree. The girl cried out suddenly, wrenched her hand free as her mind was wrenched free by fright from the old man's mumbling mysteries, and she pointed straight at Tu-op. Nuan turned, and they both ran like scared deer. Tu-op would have laughed but he happened to look down. Just below him, out from the brush and into the moonlight, with a tawny shoulder higher than the tall grass, trotted a black-and-yellow beast.

The old hunter's nostrils breathed deep the rank smell of tiger. Without noticing the suspended Tu-op, trotting silently as if not deigning to hurry for his prey until the time for springing, the Great Lord went after Nuan and the girl. Tu-op's eye measured him—longer than an elephant; longer than the longest serpent; longer than any tiger could possibly be. And he was gone.

Tu-op put both arms hard around the trunk of his tree and pressed himself close to the damp bark. It took all the strength he had to keep from falling.

TU-OP was afraid. His knees shook and his breath came in tearing gasps between his chattering teeth. But he had strength to hold on for a moment, to slide down to the ground and then to stagger along the tiger's tracks, going on straight toward a bloody, useless death.

He heard, ahead of him in the forest, a prolonged angry roar. He stopped. There was a crash, and some minutes afterward tearing sounds of a great body plunging through the brush. Every other sound in the jungle ceased, as if the whole great society of beasts and insects, worms and birds were holding their

breath while the Great Lord went by.

He passed within a few yards of where Tu-op crouched but he went on. The hunter crept ahead, hoping it was Nuan that the tiger was carrying away and not the girl. But she might be struck down too. Tu-op's heart, as he pushed through the tangled vines, was heavy with the mournful sorrow that no thinking can change, the sorrow of the savage in the face of the savage forest, before the incomprehensible cruelty of the dark green world that preys on him as he struggles to prey upon it, the never-forgotten menace of sudden death.

The moonlight did not penetrate the forest depths. He felt his way ahead very slowly and the scent told him he was near the stockade trap. He came squarely up to it and rested his hand against an upright timber. On the other side a few trees had been cut away to furnish trunks for the stockade and a ray of light, greenish, uncertain, wavering, came through.

In the stockade was a sound that made Tu-op stiffen. Something stirred there. He heard a soft moaning voice and a reassuring answer. He called. Within a few steps of where he stood, inside the trap and safe, were Nuan and the girl.

"We ran and we fell against the wall of the trap and I thought of the door," said Nuan, jubilant over his cleverness. "We were inside when the tiger leaped at the timbers. I thought that if it was built to keep a tiger in it could also keep a tiger out. Has he gone, Tu-op, my friend?"

"For the present," answered the hunter thoughtfully. He did not ask any questions which might have embarrassed the girl. "When are you coming out?" he asked. "Or are you frightened enough to wait there until sun-up when it will certainly be safe?"

"I can not get out until you help with the door, my friend. It is stuck fast. The girl could creep out between the timbers; she is no thicker than a rattan vine. But I have eaten well for many years. Will you help me lift the door now?"

The hunter appeared to have a scientific interest in their adventure. He asked questions as to what the Great Lord had done when he found them inclosed and out of reach. Nuan answered that his sniffing breath had been horribly close, that he had seemed interested in all the inhabitants of the inclosure, making no snobbish difference between the living human animals and the dead dog.

"Pfui!" said Nuan, "the bait has a mighty smell."

The sorcerer's spirits were high in rebound from his few moments of despair.

"Let us out now, Tu-op," he commanded. "We can go safely home from here, because the beast knew finally that this was a dangerous place for him. He stopped sniffing, snarled at us, and ran away. Let us out."

"Let me see if Irap's daughter really can creep between the timbers," suggested the maker of the trap. "I want to know if perhaps a very young tiger could escape from the place if once we got him in."

The girl had not spoken. She rose to her feet, trembling still with her fright, but trusting Tu-op. Her lissome body, slender as a child's, went easily between the posts.

"And you see that I can not follow," said Nuan, squeezing himself into a narrow interval. "Let me out, Tu-op."

Tu-op smiled in the darkness.

"It would not be safe for you," he answered. "I can take the girl to my house. You can wait until daylight."

"But I will not stay here with this dead dog all night," protested the sorcerer.

"What is a little carrion to a great master of the spirits and the ghosts?" Tu-op's question came floating back out of the jungle. He was already on his way with the girl to the village.

VII

BEFORE dawn Tu-op was at the door of the house of the old chief.

"In the night I heard the Great Lord roar," he said.

"We heard him also," answered the chief, rubbing his rheumy eyes and teetering and supported by two of his sons on the edge of his bamboo porch, while Tu-op looked up at him respectfully from below.

"I believe we have him in our stockade trap."

The chief blinked and gave orders. Behind him a drum began to sound and a conch of buffalo horn to bray. Out of all the houses in Ban Dong the men and boys came tumbling with their knives ready and their long spears in their fists. They pressed around the hunter at the chief's porch and demanded a reason for the alarm. The chief waited solemnly until they were all there.

"To the stockade trap!" he cried. "We have caught the tiger!"

With the chief in his chair at their head and Tu-op at the chief's side, they went down the length of the village where the brown river glittered in the morning sun. They plunged into the forest where the damp vines clung to their shoulders and whipped across their faces. They sang and thwacked their drums and pounded metal gongs and shouted like a great army on the march. As they came close to the little clearing around the trap they spread out to surround it. Spears were set in readiness. The chief gave a high shrill command and they rushed in.

As they broke out of the brush and saw the trap, their shouts died on their lips. They stopped. There was Nuan the sorcerer, gibbering at them angrily.

The chief came up with Tu-op.

"What I heard in the forest last night," said Tu-op at the chief's ear in a voice of awe, "was certainly the Great Lord himself, and what I see now in the trap is Nuan, the sorcerer. But look there, O mighty judge."

He pointed to a tiger's footprint, fresh on the wet ground.

The old chief scowled at the tracks, puzzled and distressed.

"It might be good to ask Nuan again," whispered Tu-op, "if there are men who go as we do by day but kill as tigers in the night-time."

Nuan was trying to explain, chattering feverishly in his dismay at their suspicious silence.

"Tu-op knows that I came in here to escape the Great Lord," he wheezed. "Ask Tu-op."

But the *pakam* only looked worried and said he had heard a tiger in the brush. It was different to be sure just what had happened, of course, but it was Nuan himself who had said that men could change themselves into Killers.

So the men of Ban Dong circled around Nuan in the cage, their long spears leveled at him, and Nuan shrieked that it was all a lie, that he was not a tiger, that no man had ever been a tiger, that he was a man like themselves. He denied his witchcraft and his great god Buddh' but none of that helped him at all. With superstitious tremors, thinking he might at any moment begin to change into a striped beast and snarl at them, the Ban Dong hunters came in and put their long spears between the timbers and pierced his body in a hundred places.

The strange part of it was that after Nuan's death the tiger did not come again.

A MONTH after, when old Irap was brought back into Ban Dong by Blay and the bethrothal of Irap's daughter to Blay was celebrated expensively, the boy boasted to his father—

"There are not many men who have killed the Great Lord alone in the forest but I killed one, and—"

"Hush," muttered Tu-op. "Never speak of that again."

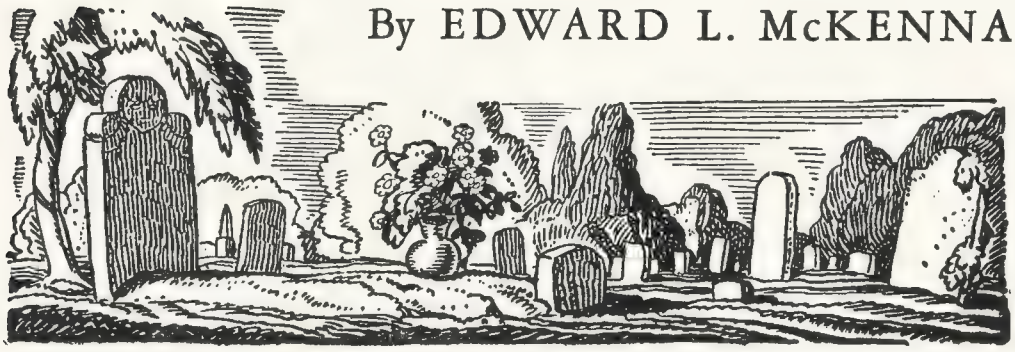
"But my fame as a great *pakam*?"

"When you killed that tiger you killed what might have been a grave question for this tribe, for your father and for old Irap," answered Tu-op. "Enjoy your luck and your pride inside your own house. Is fame better than a quiet fire and peace with your woman? I have never thought so."

A Father's Loyalty

Hardware

By EDWARD L. McKENNA



CRONIN. After a brief illness, Michael T., beloved husband of Julia M. Cronin. Funeral from his residence, 682, 78th Street. Solemn requiem Mass at the Church of the Transfiguration. Interment Calvary Cemetery.

THAT'S what the Brooklyn *Eagle* had to say for Michael Cronin; there was no reference to his passing in any of the other papers. He died a little too late. If it had been 1900 or even 1910 there would have been plenty to say. Hugh McLoughlin would have been at his funeral; so would Bill Devery, Charlie Murphy, Senator Pat McCarren—all of them. Even as it was, the church was jammed and there were quite a few notables from the Anawanda Club for old times' sake.

You see, on July 1, 1918, Michael Cronin retired from the saloon business and it was one of the real retirements. He sold out every place he owned—the Surf Avenue Café in Coney Island, the one over in Columbia Street, Brooklyn, where he got his start, the ornate restaurant on Fulton Street—more or less of a white elephant that one was—everything.

Three hundred and fifty thousand dollars he was worth, and little enough, too; and a tribute to his moderation. Because he was one of the biggest of the little men in the party. He controlled his district—that goes without saying—and his ward. His word was good in the Red Hook and in his younger days he stood ready to maintain it with a sweet right hand.

The old-timers still talk about a caucus which adjourned to a more secluded spot where Michael punched the heads of the opposition one after the other. But that was when he was proving himself. He wasn't the portly, dignified Michael T. Cronin then, who looked like an alderman and might have been one by turning his hand over; just a struggling young bartender with the will-to-power.

Senator Norton had his eye on him. The senator gave him the lots on Surf Avenue, practically speaking, for the recording fees. Michael scrimped and saved and borrowed and built his café. He loved that place. Used to go down there in the early spring and watch the workingmen take the boards from the windows and bring the little round tables out on the porches. The regulars of the Island would be hopping about, gay as

robins, greeting the pallid sunshine of the new season. And then John Y. himself, during one of his shifting political allegiances, ran across Michael and liked him and helped him, and laid the foundations of Michael's prosperity. There was a little contracting business, the Sarsfield Sand and Gravel Company, for instance. Michael had an interest in it. Lots of small city business came his way.

He married a girl that hadn't a penny and they had seven children. Three of them were boys, fine big strapping fellows all of them. One of the girls is married to "Big Terence" Callahan. Another eloped with a taxi-driver, a decent fellow. Michael bought him a laundry out in Maspeth; doing very well from all accounts.

In 1917 one of his sons, the second, marched away to Fort Niagara and died of the "flu" there. The eldest was just out of the Seminary; he saw service, too—came back, has a parish now out in Flatbush somewhere. Frank was the third one; he was only twenty when the war broke out, but he added a year to his age and got an ensign's commission in the Navy. The Navy didn't do him any good. You'll find that out.

The war hit Michael pretty hard. He became a Nationalist so late that it took possession of him. He had a service flag as big as a blanket over his bar in Columbia Street, with three stars in it. Grimly, with his own hands, he placed a gold star in it when Neal died.

He wouldn't serve soldiers or sailors—not for money, that is. Many's the shot of Johnny Walker or Four Roses went across his counters to lodge beneath an Army blouse or a Navy jumper but not a nickel would he take for it. That was his idea of obeying the law. He did comply rigorously with all the other war regulations—and there were a few of them, as you may remember.

And in July, 1918, he put up his shutters without ceremony. It was the law, he said. He had given his country one son, and stood ready to give her three. Now she was taking his business and he gave it to her with only a tightening of his hard Ulster mouth.

Frank thought his father was all kinds of a fool and said so with the freedom that prevails in Irish families. Frank came out of the war a junior lieutenant. He was an alumnus of three colleges at twenty. Columbia was the first one. Total score in his Freshman year: Phi Gamma Delta, the freshman swimming team, the freshman baseball team, three conditions and a valedictory letter from the Dean. His second school was Georgetown. Scrub quarterback and ten days in a Baltimore jail for driving a Stutz into a plate-glass show case. When the war broke out he was at N. Y. U. Just getting his growth—a hundred and eighty-five pounds, trying out for the line; got into the Columbia game and laid out a tackle. Got to Pelham Bay and found that his fraternity pin was *prima facie* evidence that he could run a submarine chaser in the North Sea.

And it was one of the times that such reasoning was good, too. He did learn to run that sub-chaser; could turn her around on a dime and make a landing with wind and tide against him and never jar the paint work and hardly bruise a fender. Strangely enough, he got to liking it—to zig-zagging among a convoy in a fog, gambling with the likelihood that a back-fire would ignite the dirty bilges, battling with storm and cold and sleet. Also, he liked to put into the harbor, where he would soon find congenial company of both sexes. He had only one objection to the war—it was hard to get good rye. However, he found you could make Scotch do.

Frank's war record, nevertheless, was as good as that of many total abstainers. He had the helm himself when the chaser was depositing a load of T. N. T. directly over a submerging submarine. The Navy Department followed its usual custom in demanding the heads of some of the Germans for proof, so his ship got no credit. He had a star painted on the funnel, anyway. Later on, it had to be painted over and he got a nasty reprimand from some of the Navy-yard sailors.

But you can't do much with a man who tows a German mine into port and gets two spy suspects. These two fellows were signaling with a flashlight from a dory to points unknown, which was not considered good form in war time. Frank jumped down into the dory with an automatic in his hand and the two men came very quietly. Somebody's got to run the ships.

After the war for a long time he did nothing. He just rested and got pocket-money from his mother, and it was some pocket he had, too.

Then he bought a motor-launch and was always tinkering with it. It appears that some of his friends had a bungalow on the Sound. He would disappear for a week, ten days, and come back looking tired and somewhat shot to pieces in spite of his sunburn.

It was quite a bungalow. What would happen up there was, in part, something like this: About ten or eleven o'clock at night a Cadillac would drive up with a couple of men and Judy O'Grady and the lady that's known as Lou and Our Nell. They would go into the bungalow and there would be a hot time in the old town until about two o'clock or so. At this hour Frank would make his appearance, his blond hair crisp from the spray of the Sound. Then the men would go and fetch a few cases from Frank's motor boat and by and by, say around four o'clock, the Cadillac would return to New York with whatever whisky the party hadn't consumed.

From these small beginnings Frank grew prosperous. He bought an Elco and a Speedway and became pretty well known around the three-mile limit. He was glad when it became fifteen miles, and no doubt is delighted with the hundred-mile arrangement, just as a good poker player might like to see the ante raised. Michael may have known or suspected all along what his son was doing. Anyhow, he found out.

Toward the end of December, the 17th or 18th it was, Michael was sitting quietly listening to the radio when the phone rang. Somebody wanted him to come to a place in Sheepshead Bay. His son Frank was hurt.

Michael told his wife that he would have to go out. The Chief wanted him at the Hall, he said, and he might be late.

"At the Hall?" said his wife, wondering, for Michael was pretty well out of politics.

"Yes," said Michael. "I may not be back tonight."

He wasn't.

He found his son in bed at McGurk's Hotel in Sheepshead Bay. You know what a lot of the waterfront small hotels are like. Well, Frank had a broken leg, and a bandage all over his head.

"Motor smash-up?" asked Michael.

"No, Pop. I—I got beat up."

"Who beat you up?" asked Michael ominously.

"You can't get 'em, Pop. They're on the high seas with my roll and my boat. The Speedway, at that. Hi-jackers."

"Ah."

"I didn't call you, Pop. My helper did that—when I was still cuckoo. He's all right but he gets scared quick. When they jumped us he gave right in. They didn't touch him. They knocked me out and put the two of us in a little rowboat. We—we had a rough trip in, Pop."

"Ah. Did they clean you out, Frank?"

"Clean me out? Say, listen, they couldn't clean me out. This hits me hard right at Christmas, that's all. I got the Elco left, all right. I'm going out in her tomorrow."

"With a broken leg?"

"I came in with one. I'll go out with one. I got to, Pop."

"Why do you?"

"I got to. I got my Christmas orders. I got my trade. I have to take care of my friends. Got to get them their liquor for Christmas."

"Buy it here. I'll lend it to you."

"No. I'm getting it. I'm going out, I tell you. These people aren't just my customers. They're my friends. They depend on me and I don't throw them down."

"Ah."

That was an argument that Michael could understand.

"I'll get out all right. The Doc's coming in tomorrow and fix me up with some kind of a cast. I'll persuade Harry all right. He'll go along. He can run the ship. He's afraid of me, but I wouldn't trust him alone with a thousand dollars and a fast boat. If I could—well—"

"Where's your money, Frank?"

It developed that Frank didn't have the cash available at once. There was a little too much bluster about his reply. Michael began to think Frank might have some difficulty about getting it.

He pulled a big gold watch out of his pocket.

"Listen to me now, Frank. You'll stay here quiet till tomorrow night. Then I'll bring you the money and you can start. You'll stay here, see?"

"I got to," said Frank. "I got to get this leg in a better cast, so I can be moved in it."

"All right. Now I'll see you tomorrow about this time. Or—when would you be starting?"

"About two o'clock in the morning, Pop."

"I'll be here. Now is this helper of yours around?"

"He's downstairs, Pop. Want me to call him?"

"No, I'll see him. Is he that dago-looking guy downstairs?"

"No. That's McGurk. You ask him for Harry. So long, Pop."

Michael went down and in due course found Harry. Harry looked as if he might well be both dishonest and cowardly.

Michael gave Harry a good cigar which Harry put in his pocket. Then he invited Harry for a nice motor ride with him, while he got some cash for Frank. Harry didn't ride in Packards every day and the prospect of cash for Frank seemed attractive. So Michael drove him to the Day and Night Bank where they collected $1100.

Then they turned back, and Michael explained to Harry that they were going for a little trip out to Rum Row that night. Harry wasn't anxious to go. Michael knew only one way to deal with argument, and that was to repeat his views with some emphasis. Harry became less anxious to go, so Michael stopped the car and grabbed Harry by the arm, up close to the shoulder, till Harry winced.

"You and I'll go," said Michael convincingly. "Sure, man, what are you afraid of? Won't I be with you? All you'll have to do is run your little motorboat. If there's any pirates I'll take care of them."

Harry finally guessed that he'd go. They put the Packard in a garage on Shore Road.

"The last time I was on a ship it was to a clambake at Clason Point, on the *Samuel B. Morse*, in 1911," said Michael as they slipped along Emmons Avenue. "What do you carry on these trips—a revolver?" There was an automatic in the Elco's lockers. "I never shot one of them," said Michael.

They were down at the boat-house now. Michael stooped in the yard and picked up a substantial piece of timber.

"We'll take this along, though I'd sooner a pick-handle," he said. "It's a bitter cold night, Harry."

Harry suggested a drink.

"Never used it in my life," said Michael. Which was the flat and absolute truth. "You can have one, just one, and I'll see you take it."

Michael got the tails of his fur coat wet in the rowboat going out to the buoy. It was dead quiet—the quietness that comes only on the water.

"Now get me that gat," he said to Harry.

Harry got him the pistol and Michael tucked it away in his trousers. The engine sparked. They drew out of the inlet.

About three o'clock Harry looked over at Michael who was huddled in the stern.

"There's the ships, over there," he said.

"Huh?" said Michael suddenly. "Oh—ah— I was dozing, I guess. All right. Now what do I do?"

Harry told him. Presently they hailed the *Island Queen*, which ought to have been out of Liverpool, bound for the Bahamas, but wasn't. Michael had bought liquor before, and he bought it now as if he were used to transacting business on a swaying deck. They got it on board.

At six o'clock in the morning it was stowed away in a little tool-house in the Sheepshead Bay yard. Michael was none too anxious to leave it there, but he had no choice.

At six-fifteen, Michael stopped in at McGurk's Hotel with Harry, whom he had by the arm—just in case—and they woke up the startled Frank.

"So we got the stuff in a little tool-house," concluded Michael.

Frank nodded.

"That's right, Pop, that's the place."

Harry looked virtuous.

"Now, then, Frank, can you carry on from here?"

It appeared that Frank's troubles were over. The people at the boat-house were right, he said.

"And get your friends their liquor?" Michael asked sardonically.

"Gee, Pop, you—you helped me out of a hole. I—"

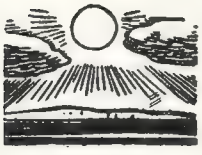
"Forget it," said Michael. "I'm going home now Frank. I've caught a little cold and I'm going to bed. Going home and go to bed. Good luck, boy. I'll call you and have your mother call you."

But Michael never called him. He went to bed, and he had pneumonia by four o'clock. He died three days later.

He knew he was in a bad way. Once, when a dog howled outside—

"The banshee," he said and raised up and tried to bless himself. And then later on he waved his arm, as if he held a glass.

"Merry Christmas, boys," he said, and chuckled.



A boy who was comrade to a wolf

A *Friendship*

CHAPTER I

A GOVERNMENT TRAPPER JOB

BILLINGS, the Government trapper, checked over his accounts and vital statistics memoranda. He was in his camp at a spring-fed waterhole on the west side of the Trembling Haze Range, east of which was a vast uninhabited country of tumultuous geological formations and splendid breaks, so wild and rugged that few humans had invaded them. Billings' job had been to draw a belt of extermination across the border of that rough interior. Now the job was done.

Superintendent "Tip" Legent had grown tired and nervous hearing over the wire the voice of Lute Lawson of the Leaf Brand cattle ranch telling of another raid by Ghost and his wolves, or by cougars or bears or coyotes. Something had to be done. Lute was likely to persuade the Legislature to memorialize Congress and to exercise the citizen's prerogative and petition the President.

"Go down and clean the Trembling Hazes," Tip told Billings. "Do it right."

Pride, backed by ability used with the thoroughness expected of a conscientious representative of the Federal Government, had marked the career of Billings heretofore. As he considered this Trembling Haze proposition, he was unashamed. He had earned his money according to the specifications.

Lute Lawson had demanded the extermination of creatures, carnivorous types, which had killed his baby cattle, destroyed some fine colts and spoiled his chicken and turkey dinners at the ranch. The trapper had now satisfied himself—no mean task.

Lobos, coyotes, wildcats, bears and cougars had been slain and their hides given over to the biological collections. The range of the Trembling Haze was dead, with only memories left of the feral population to which Lute Lawson had objected. Young stock was now safe, and so, for the time, were rodents and other creatures on which meat-eaters mainly live, but these, as competitors for the grasses of the forage pastures, were as yet negligible.

A Complete Novelette By RAYMOND S. SPEARS

in the Wilderness

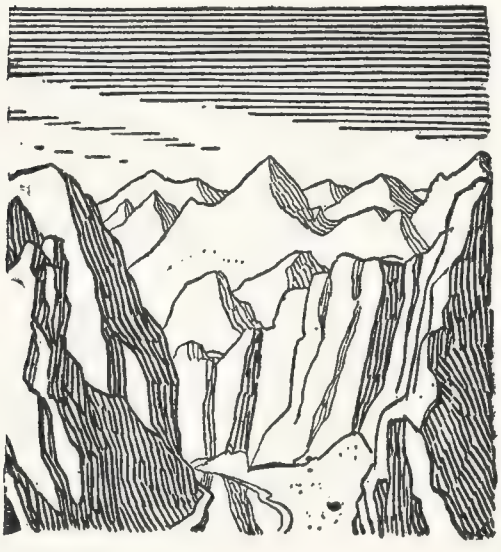
Billings, in his final accounting to Superintendent Tip Legent, displayed the high sense of honor he had. He was sure in his own mind that Ghost, the grisly leader of the lobo pack, was dead, yet he would not say so definitely. Instead he wrote:

Mr. Supert. Legent
Sleepy House,

Dear Tip:

I have killed and skinned and by express shipped further hides as per invoice; the hides of coyotes, wildcats, three cougars and eight more lobos, the same being trapped, poisoned and killed, except which ones I shot.

But about the big fellow, Ghost, which you particularly mentioned, I haven't the skin, as aforesaid, but he carried a pill off in a fantail squirrel and ever since I ain't found his tracks and ain't seen him. And besides I found some big grays too far gone to be skun, but sure enough dead. There was anuther she-wolf which Ghost favored and her hide ain't in the bale, but I know I pinned her too far back, and me and Lute Lawson is both plumb sure she didn't live for long. So I reckon I can report this valley, and over the crest of the Trembling Haze well below the east timberline as cleaned, skun and satisfactory to Lute and us.



So I am hereby pulling stakes, ready for bizness anywhere else as usual.

Your sincere friend and Govt. Servant,

—Lloyd Sydem Billings.

N. B. *About next year, late, better inspect through here for jackrabbits, squirrels, gophers, prairie-dogs; let me know if you need a job for the Mop-Up Squad for I sure wiped down these slopes and acrost country through here.*

—Billings.

Billings was confident he had rounded out his task. If he had suspected the

grisly Ghost still survived his efforts, he would have reckoned his work only half done. He knew, and Tip Legent would know, that when Ghost carried away the dead chipmunk, it left an element of doubt on the success of the expedition. But Billings moved his traps, chemical poisons, working library and camp equipage, caught an emergency order by telephone and headed for the Piute Bad Lands, where a coyote had gone bad and was making a name for himself among the sheep owners. And this coyote would keep him busy perhaps a week, perhaps six months. In any event, it was his job to be relentless and successful—a sure-killer.

BUT the Ghost of the Trembling Haze was not dead. The old gray wolf was shambling, lonely, his head hanging and tail dragging, walking on stones which kept no track of his passing. He had carried the fantail squirrel with a cyanide capsule buried in its flesh to where his last remaining mate, the small she-wolf, was writhing in suffering from the bullet which had hit too far back. He could have caught a squirrel alive for her. He had in fact brought her fawns and prairie-chickens, sheep meat and young pig, piling the food high around her. She could eat none of these, but gulped down the poison pill, choked and gave a twitch or two.

It was better to die thus quickly, by deliberate suicide, than go on suffering. The "varmint" dope had gone home, though the hide wasn't skinned and sold to swell the Government vermin-skin sale fund. Both wolves had known that bait would, if eaten, kill.

The gray wolf's appetite was good as uneasily he wandered about, silent. All his pack were done for, skinned or too far gone for skinning. At that, he wasn't afraid, and when he was ready he ate with a choice so discriminating that the evidences of it made Lute Lawson speechless with wrath till he could reach over the telephone the superintendent of vermin extermination.

A sly, cunning and changeable disposition had saved Ghost from the fate which had pursued him and the pack he had led. Knowing the nature of wolves, Billings would have been the first to report—orally—that Ghost had carried the poisoned fantail to his mate to hasten the end of her misery. As it was, considering the fact that the Ghost had not, for years past, touched meat he hadn't killed, the trapper would discuss the possibility that Ghost himself had deliberately eaten that bait in a suicidal mood. But naturally neither the trapper nor the superintendent were going to make themselves liable to their high and conservative superiors with any such animal-intelligence line of surmise, even when the evidence was unmistakable to such competent wildcrafters.

The slopes of the Trembling Haze would never again echo to the running cry of a wild hunting pack. The lobos were replaced by airedales and borzoi breeds whose activities would be controlled by humans.

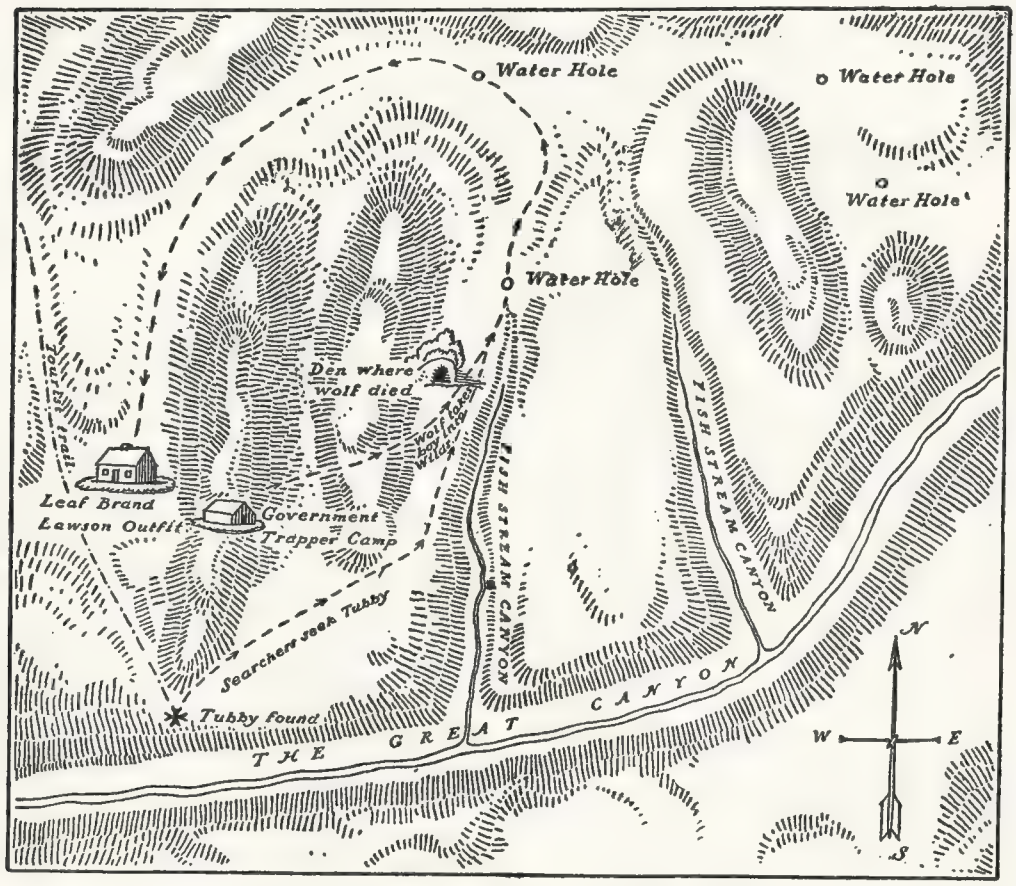
The Ghost of the Trembling Haze poked along, walking only where his paws left no track to catch the keenest eyes in the Government killing service. The prints of his big, well known pads thus vanished from the range though the wolf himself remained—a better, craftier, more dangerous raider than ever. He circled around till the north wind crossed the place where the Government trapper had established his camp headquarters.

The wind came less odorous than in months and the taint was old, growing mild. The trapper was gone. The Ghost went to reassure himself. Sure enough, the horses, tent, outfit and all were removed, leaving only the desolate scar and its evaporating aromas.

Cautiously the wolf worked down to the scene. The trapper and killer had desolated the country, and Ghost knew it. The tracks from the camp of death led down the cañon over the alluvial fan and on toward the Leaf Brand ranch, whose up-and-stirring cattle-raising methods included bred-up deep-bodied beef crossed

and qualified according to the most approved fancy strains which the careful studies of the expert and scientist could produce.

On the ranch was a boy passing thirty months of age, pride of Lute and joy of Mabel Lawson. "Tubby" Lawson was a wiry, active boy, dark-skinned and gaunt, who darted about the buildings, clambered over the coursing pack of dogs, pulling



calves by the tails and horrifying every one by making friends with rattlesnakes. County fairs and the State Stock Association exhibit awarded the boy First Baby prize three times in succession.

Tubby had the odd gift of making his face perfectly expressionless. While he played, his countenance would be wreathed in smiles and wrinkles of delight. Then suddenly he would cease his activities, seem to shrink into himself and presently settle into a blank, silent, watchful mood. The people who saw him in these odd minutes invariably wondered what he was thinking about.

He would crouch in the red shadow of the corral or building fence and gaze with squinting eyes through the quivering air at the mountains. He could talk when very young, but days would pass in which he stubbornly refused to say one word to any human being, though he was forever loquacious with the stupid borzois, the ranch Airedales, which belonged to the ugly strain of this species, and more especially with two cats which slunk around the outfit ignoring all the humans but the boy. He fed them from the table for the rare privilege of lurking near-by while they caught pretty birds and drank or bathed.

Tubby climbed on the back of one of the lank Russian wolfhounds. He dug his feet and fingers into the shaggy hair. The dog scrambled erect and enjoyed transporting the baby all around the outfit. And a day came when Mrs. Lawson heard the boy's happiest screams, and on investigating found his exuberance due to the beast's loping along at high speed, the boy on his back, in pursuit of a cottontail rabbit which incautiously had come through the scattering sage to the acres of alfalfa.

Mrs. Lawson was sure Tubby would break his neck. Lute Lawson was positive the youngster would some day take all the worth-while "firsts" for riding, from Cheyenne to Pendleton. The cattleman had a vision into the future, of his boy rising to eminence and power—president of the National Beef Growers' Association and the best man, physically, west of the Missouri. His mother was also ambitious for her son. Tubby should be a gentleman, a scholar, with the nicest manners in the world. He would not be ashamed to dine with dudes and their ladies on the ranches or in the swellest restaurant in Denver or even Omaha, Nebraska, and would be able to dance as well as some of those motion picture actors she had seen on the screen at the three-times-a-week over at Sleepy House, the emporium community of a vast and promising country.

Tubby circled around on a longer radius. Calves, dogs, even colts learned to transport him. At three years he had his own burro, a fancy black coltish beast which one of the cowboys had caught for him and brought in from an inspection of the far-flung cattle bunches.

One morning the boy was playing around in the warm May sunlight. At noon he did not come in to eat. Every one was busy, for the calves were being branded. His mother noticed the lad's absence. She rustled around, looking for him.

In mid-afternoon, the young stock having been branded, all hands went rambling around looking for the boy. With terrible anxiety the waterhole was examined. Men circled in the sage. Lawson climbed to the roof with his glasses and swept the valley basin for sign of the land. The boy's tracks, of his bare feet and of his hands, too, were everywhere in the dust near-by. He was likely at any moment to pop out from somewhere, from under a clump of sage or from behind a box or something, but as time went by he didn't appear.

The borzois came shambling in from their daily chase of jackrabbits and cottontails. Sometimes they had spied antelope and raced to tear their throats. Coyotes, of course, had been exterminated around those parts since the time the Government hunter had worked so thoroughly. Never had rabbits been so plentiful. The dogs were growing fat without ranging very far.

The burro was gone. Two days later one of the cowboys found the animal twenty miles away at the waterhole where the Government hunter had camped. Seven men dragged that country in vain. They found no sign of Tubby, not a track of his feet anywhere.

WEEKS, months of frantic hope alternating with despair ensued. Mabel Lawson in those terrible days learned to stare at that vast, sunny, colorful land with anger and horror. The very things which she had loved now taunted her into hate as grim as it was terrible. She had been happy in the great country. Now her anguish made her miserable.

Just when Lute Lawson was coming into his own, and felt the complacence of those who early catch the world by the tail and teach it to follow their mandates and wishes, a cold doubt seized his heart and made his home wretched.

He set his jaws. He would never quit. He told Mabel to stop her mourning. He grew surly and angry. He was obliged to take a grip on himself. He was sure Tubby was dead. A baby could not live in that bristling, glittering land. Some accident had befallen the boy. A caving bank in a draw had done

the evil. In all that ten thousand square miles of country, vacant and open though it seemed to be, there were miles on which no human set foot.

The good cheer of the Leaf Brand outfit became the hard, enduring, taking-it habit of many embittered, disappointed groups. The Lawsons had been so sure, so gay and so self-satisfied that in all the country Fate had no brighter mark. And now the passer-by met a surly welcome and an inhospitable silence. A tourist could fill his water canteen, a neighbor could claim a bunk, but sheep had better stay where they belonged. Often laughter now led to a sneering inquiry as to "What 'n Hades was the matter?" or "Who'd they thought they were, making all that noise?" in this land where sorrow drove its victims to enduring toil and misery.

Sometimes the mother walked aimlessly up and down the floor. Reason declared the tragedy could not have been averted. Instinct refused consolation or acquiescence. Where had Tubby gone that no one could find trace of him? Thought of his slow anguish, of his probable fate, was worse than any certainty would have been. Mabel Lawson did not reconcile herself. She must know—yet who could tell her?

Neither her dreams nor her mother's heart gave answer. She hated the Leaf Brand and all its country. What hadn't the land done to her? And she faced her husband cold and indignant beyond all reason or telling. She couldn't stand it—she wouldn't! Nevertheless, she did.

CHAPTER II

TWO LEARNERS IN THE WILD

TUBBY saw the men riding out on their horses, so why shouldn't he go away in the morning, too? That's logic. The big borzoi known as Snapper had carried the boy out into the sage, circling around the agile young burro. Tubby transferred himself, after a time, to the jack. The adventure led toward the Trembling Haze Mountains. When all hands were thirsty, they found a waterhole. When they were hungry, they ate raw meat and strong grass. Mothers often are quite unaware of their children's varied appetites.

And when Tubby was tired he curled down in the purple shadow of a rock to sleep, content. The borzoi went home. The burro rambled over into the next cañon but one and found some salt to lick in the Government trapper's abandoned camp. And when the youngster rolled up out of his slumber and stretched, he wasted no time on the past or future. He went looking for something to eat.

He met a lonely wolf. That was something like—one of the crowd, so to speak. The baby talked with friendly surprize. He hadn't happened to meet this big doggie before. Perhaps the wolf was amused by the mistake. It isn't wise to be sure about such things. They walked off together, the baby on three legs, hanging fast to the hair of the beast with one hand. The animal that had matched wits and beaten a Government trapper, than whom no ordinary taker of wild life is likely to be even nearly as intelligent, was no fool.

Here was a human pup—young, funny, and too small to hurt one. Humans had a pretty bad smell, and probably wouldn't taste very good, anyhow, even to a hungry wolf. The Ghost wasn't hungry. He could pick up a rabbit anywhere. The boy's voice was strange but it broke the dread monotony of clicking stones, whispering winds and the whimpering of rodents or shrill birds. The youngster who had talked to dogs and cows had something to say to which a wolf might well listen.

So they became acquainted and conversational. In some loose sand in a dry-wash the wolf and boy played. The beast forgot for the time his determination not to leave any tracks. When a cowboy came through that part of the country three or four days later, he saw the acre of wind-rippled dry-wash bar, but thought the trails were those of "just animals."

When the wolf was hungry he caught a yearling jackrabbit and brought it to the tired lad. Tubby was crying for his mamma, but a hind leg consoled him. He took it out of the wolf's paws and jaws. Ghost just grinned at the joke. For less than that he had run a fellow lobo clear off the range, but this human pup acted just like one of his own rascals had done, before the Government killed them off. Presently Tubby handed the bone with its sucked shreds of meat to Ghost, and screamed with delight when the wolf's jaws crushed the bone to splinters.

Then, hanging to the wolf's fur, scrambling along beside him, Tubby went up into a windbreak the beast knew, and there they curled down together. The baby whimpered, weeping for home, mamma and daddy. Ghost knew the timbre of those sighing wails; he, too, had been lonely. So the savage brute licked the man-child, as a dog would have, in sympathy.

Mamma, daddy, the cowboys weren't there. The borzois, stupid brutes, had vanished. The burro had wandered off. Precisely as the wolf had lost his pack, the boy had lost his outfit, so they threw in together. The grisly scoundrel had nearly forgotten how to play, for he was old and his anxieties had been numerous. Now he had to play, to keep peace with his partner. They scrambled around together, and Ghost was badly startled when Tubby climbed his back and held fast. He looked when the boy said "Get-ap!" grinned, went romping not too violently out of the hateful, poisonous country eastward into the vast wilds beyond the Trembling Haze region.

Sometimes his tense muscles cramped, and Tubby fell off. Whimpering and cursing, the boy climbed to ride again. He was a persistent kid, amusing, and far better than no companion at all; hence indispensable to Ghost. Hunting, the wolf caught what the boy saw. Homeless, vagabonding, the boy's eager restlessness and curiosity took them hither and yon, up on heights from which to look far away, and down into hollows where the lad's natural instinct to hide was matched by the furtive, slinking habits of his companion.

Behind the ridge of the Trembling Haze was a tumult of peaks. In this country were no humans. Water was scarce. Grazing was too poor to tempt the cattle or sheep growers. The fastnesses had been rarely entered, even by the fugitive outlaws, who could not bear the desolate immensity of wilds.

The wolf had never ventured away from his old range before. The need of it had never dawned on him. He had known his own country, the water, the hiding dens, the trails and the food supply. He found himself dragged by an ear through incredible indignities. He succumbed to the novelty of having a rider on his back, clinging fast hand and feet. He grew accustomed to the largeness of indifference to place or occasion. They slept by day or night as the youngster's whimsy determined. They went beyond all the bounds of territory the Ghost had known.

The wolf would have been content to slink around where the cattle worked up the ravines and cañons, trusting to his walking on the rocks to hide his presence. He had already learned to do his traveling at night, too. Not so the baby. He went scrambling about in the sunshine, as well as by starlight. He was appalling in his indifference to his size and ability. He chased, cheerily, a cougar who ran up a tree as if a whole pack of wolves were after him. The boy would have chased the cat up the trunk except that he couldn't climb it. He went over and mixed up with a bear which was pawing into a hive of wild bees, but came tumbling and yelling out of that, stung and angry.

The two skirted along the brink of the world, basking in the sunshine by day, snuggling down in wind-breaks and hollows, the baby arms and legs wrapped around the shaggy wolf, hugging the warmth. The grisly killer licked the smooth, soft skin with his long, slender tongue, snorting and half-growling at his own toleration.

The boy had been walking a little on his feet, a little on his hands and feet. He now shambled along on all fours or clinging with one hand to the jogging wolf. At play the two bit, clawed and wrestled. In alarm or excitement, the boy would stand erect to look around, but in doubt he was likely to do as the wolf did, drop behind something and peer through the screen of brush or along the side of a rock or log.

The boy came upon a spotted fawn flattened like a rock on the ground, where a doe had left it. Throwing himself on the young beast, Tubby gave a yell and the Ghost came rushing. Together they killed and feasted on their prey. Then the boy dragged what was left across country till they came to a hole under a ledge where they went in to sleep. The wolf would never have carried the rest of the carcass with him. He was glad, in the morning, to share with the boy what was left of their kill.

The boy learned. So did the wolf.

CHAPTER III

A WILDLING WALKS ALONE

A BOY and a wolf had found a haven beyond the mountains of the Trembling Haze. This was bad country. Mountains had been flung up to challenge the skies. Winds, frosts and eroding waters had shattered and washed the peaks and slopes. Day and night, one could hear at intervals the sharp crackling sound when some stone fell to burst upon a rock, or the running, hissing turmoil when an avalanche coiled down a slope, like a serpent creeping by.

Up cañons, over mesas and plateaus, through parks of majestic timber and across pastures where many creatures fed, the two went wandering, urged by the wolf's hunger and the boy's curiosity. The boy had learned quite a little human talk, and he made this do in his conversation with the puzzled, amused Ghost of the wilderness. The beast's alarm was never quite reconciled to the human's courage.

The boy made the wolf's experience his own. His wiry limbs, his taut, smoothly working muscles worked with the precision of the beast's. He ran on his toes, or on one or both sets of limbs. To see, he stood erect, but to slip away, he stooped and scuttled, crawling closer to the ground than the wolf could. He would snuffle through the land of stone; he would sniff with nostrils upturned while he moved through the timber where the ground was covered with pungent pine needles, but over the wastes of dry, dusty alkali he would not try to smell at all.

Tubby's eyes were clearer, sharper than the wolf's. He could see much farther. He would see the shape of a fawn or the motion of a rabbit at a distance too great for the wolf to see anything distinguishably. But the wolf would catch the scent of a passing flock of deer when the boy would not hear or see anything in the star-lit night. Between them they invented a language of their own, growl and sign, click of teeth, hissing breath and whistlings, gay barking and howls.

They discovered echos and delighted to fill a cañon with the wandering tumult of repeating voices. To their ears came the sounds which startled their vagrant fancies. Huddled down together in some bed of sand or nest of leaves, they would each dream with uneasy fears and delights which were molded in the strange factory of visions—the one perhaps believing himself to be a man; and the other envious of the wolf's prowess.

The boy knew the art of covering. He dragged brush up over their bodies when winds blew cold and snow sifted through the courses of the cañons and changed the hues of the valleys. The wolf knew the lee side of a shelter; the boy fashioned a wind-break where none was conveniently near, remembering perhaps the corral fence and the ranch-house roof. He lacked training, but not originality.

The boy ate berries and nuts, gnawed at bark and experimented with foodstuffs. Some things made him sick. The wolf had an appetite for a few things which the boy disliked.

Tubby found a bee-hive and returned again and again to the cave, trying to raid the honey whose sweetness he liked. He was helped by the wolf. Together they dug a hole in the loose earth off to one side of the cave and came into the stored-up riches from behind. The boy burrowed into the comb and, breaking out big chunks, fed the wolf with one hand while he stuffed himself with the other. And so he ate himself pot-bellied.

Both curled up to sleep contentedly, feeding to the gorge the next day and the next. But having rested and not being hungry, the boy wanted to be doing something, going somewhere. The wolf, older, and weary with years of flight and adventure, would have been content to remain at his ease, satisfied to wash the drips from his shaggy hair and dream in his snoozing.

Seizing his companion by the scruff of the neck, or taking a good tail-hold, the human unceremoniously evicted the wolf into excursions and trips, not to seek things to eat or to be on the watch for strangers, but to feed a mind growing avid and restless. One was starving to know; the other glad of the absence of unfavorable conditions.

At times the boy went off alone, looking back over his shoulder and snarling with comical disgust to think his companion would rather sleep than be on the jump, spurning the earth with active feet. The boy would have dragged the beast abroad, willy-nilly, except that Ghost had teeth that by nips on smooth sun-blackened skin gave the lad lessons in minding his own business and respecting the desires or instincts of others.

Thus, abandoned to his own devices, Tubby chased scorpions and laughed with abandon and fearlessness when a stone rolled down a mountain and sent deer leaping in wild alarm. And again, when a rock dropped in play broke the back of a big buck, the boy raced away to bring the wolf, and with expanding pride and strangling sounds endeavored to tell his companion what was beyond the range of his language to describe and too much for the wolf to understand. The boy argued, and the wolf by turns laughed and pretended he knew all about it, thus exasperating the history-maker who neither enjoyed being ridiculed nor not being understood. A story-teller had found a tale too big for him to tell.

The Ghost of the Trembling Haze Range was not young when he took up with the scion of the enemy race of humans, making a wildling pet of a product of civilization. Age was creeping into the beast's heart and inclinations. Time had been when he raced to kill too much. Now it was easier to let the active, resourceful, restless human bring in meats and fruits and spoils of edible things.

The time came when the wolf staggered as he walked and would have starved because he could not hunt for food. The boy was tender and troubled in these days. The wolf had never known more than friendliness in the old days of the pack. He had carried a deadly morsel to the wounded female of his stalwart hunting and killing days. Now he ate gratefully or with petulant indignation at his own weakness what the gaunt, puzzled boy caught to give him. Under ordinary conditions he would have died. Now he slept and dreamed in the den while the boy scaled high mountains unnecessarily, and went poking into remote fastnesses, or troubled other living things to see their active reactions.

Tubby Lawson had learned by imitation the ways and abilities of a wolf. The boy could not run as fast, at his best; he was not so keen of nose; but he could see and hear better, and his natural strategy of lying in wait and of the short cut were added to by a development of foresight far and away beyond the wolf's.

THE boy was sitting in the mouth of the cave they had found, watching the light of the stars flickering on the sands of the valley where they lived, when the wolf came creeping, gasping and struggling to his friend. The boy tried to help. All their understanding of

each other in this hour came to the surface. Then the beast collapsed.

The boy knew that the best in the wolf, the bigness and activity of the gray creature had departed, as if to be a voice wandering down the valley in the wind. Covered with brush, piled about with honey and meat, still the inert figure did not respond to the boy's ministrations. The body stiffened. It withered, and one time when the boy returned hopefully again he found what had been his wolf to be just a tangle of hair, bones and shreds mingled with the débris of things meant to keep him warm and give him nourishment.

Tubby did not know what had overcome the wolf, but it made him pause and listen. He saw a shadow out of the corner of his eyes. When he turned quickly to look it was gone. He heard voices howling down the lees, but when he dashed to see, the wolf was not there. He heard only the quivering, wandering echoes of what had been heard long ago.

Loneliness, more dreadful than cougars or old bears, stilled the tongue and throat of the wildling.

He did not like snakes. Scorpions and bees were stinging things, best left alone. He could kill a kitten cougar, but had better circle a bit when he saw an old one.

The cold drove him to shelters out of the wind, and yet he could not resist the impulse to climb so high in the mountains that the invisible pressure of chill air or its mist-laden gloom hurt him and drove him leaping down again. He went wandering, circling, scrambling in every direction. No sooner did he come upon some strange territory than he must go sneaking and prowling like a wolf to smell it out at night and perhaps squint over it from some shelter in brush or crevice by day. Then he would back-track and short-cut into the old homeland, surprized sometimes to find how far he had to go, counting the water-holes between the two places. Back at the old den he would whimper among the débris and listen to the passing of the voices in the winds.

Cougars snarled at him, deer fled from him, the birds leaped out of reach, even when he wasn't hungry and merely wanted to be near them. Off yonder he came upon a coyote, snippy, gritting its teeth, slinking away in puzzled anxiety on seeing so much sense and understanding in so strange and agile a human.

He went trying to persude friendliness to the woods' creatures to assauge his longings for a companion, only to meet the rebuffs of wildcats, the suspicion of badgers, the alarm of deer. He could catch them all, but by the time he had made them quiet and comforting they were limp and lifeless.

Bigger than everything else in this tumult of mountains was the desolation. He could lean against a tree, but it would not respond to his whisperings. He could catch a wild-fowl at a water-hole, but it merely struggled till it quieted, which left him nothing to do but eat it. He was delighted to roll stones down declivities, in order to run with them, making believe they were alive, that the noise they made was talking, and that when they came to a pause they were tired and had begun to rest.

He walked with bears at a little distance. He ran with deer for sake of the one-sided pleasure.

One day he found the kill of a cougar and presently discovered the big cat sitting on his haunches in the sun, looking down into an enormous chasm of colorful beauty. Tubby tentatively did the same. The boy snarled at the cat, playfully. The huge feline yawned and purred a casual growl. The boy snorted. The cat hissed. The cougar presently emerged from his blinking sun-gazing and arched his back, switched his tail and walked sidewise toward the boy, who crouched on all fours and, sticking out his tongue, growled a yappy warning of delight. The cougar stopped, straightened around and glared, then grinned with feline delight, assured that this was a big joke—a human making a noise like a wolf!

Used to walking alone, the cougar nevertheless sometimes desired to stroll

with other beasts. He now made tentative leaps and bounds in playfulness, the boy matching him with friendly gestures of the hunter beasts—pretense of bite and scratch, imitation of assault and ludicrous motions of mock flight. So the human chased the big cat up a tree, filling the wilderness with shrill, harsh wolf howlings. And then the cougar waylaid his rare playmate and nearly twisted his neck out of joint in the accuracy of his travesty of a kill.

Weary with their game, the two presently separated, satisfied. They did not chance to meet again, for the cougar was far from home and the boy found a bear cub and a yearling. He got along with them joyously till the mother came along and ran the intruder out of the country. She wasn't going to have that kind of thing going on—no indeeed! Not if she knew the smell of a man when she crossed it!

Restlessly, moved by wanderlust and curiosity, the boy followed the crests of ridge backs, dipped into cañons and was guided by his instinctive premonition of water up wind to springs, streams and holes, not all of which were good to drink. He prowled along the banks and around the shores. He swam the deep currents. He reached cautious fingers into schools of fish which he discovered in shallows and rather liked their flesh and eggs. When a big bear chased him away he rolled down rocks, one of which bounded and hit the bullying brute, making the scoundrel howl and tumble about in pain and indignation. With laughter echoing from his throat, the human rambled on his way, shambling on two, three or four paws, his long legs and arms equally at his service.

And so he came to a height from which the view below gave him pause. He knew the bigness of that red abysmal depth. He had scrambled along its brink endlessly. He had worked up out of the edge of the running flood into the chill and snowy heights miles back and at the top of the world. But he had never before come upon those numerous creatures that met his eye, nor listened to such sounds nor witnessed such activities.

A wolf would never go plunging down into such a commotion by sunlight. At night, in the gloom, the Ghost of the Trembling Haze had investigated the trails and dens of other beasts. It was a good idea to have the night-cover upon one's own activities. Presently the day would disappear. Then the wildling could look things over, close up and with reasonable safety.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT CAN'T BE, IS!

LUTE LAWSON and his wife Mabel had at last sold out the Leaf Brand outfit. They had received a good price for what they must always regard as their great disastrous possession. A few years had not softened the blow which had fallen upon them. But they had after much grim contrition returned to their old affection, bracing each other's heart against the recurring spasms of anguish at the memory of the mystery which enveloped their boy child's disappearance.

"Oh, I *know* he isn't dead!" Mrs. Lawson would declare.

"There, there!" Lute would soothe her. "We'll find him—perhaps after we go on beyond this —— old world!"

"Don't, Lute!" she would remonstrate. "We mustn't talk that way. Something might happen—"

"As though it hadn't!" he grimaced.

"I know—but—" She shook her head, blinking, trying to bear up.

THEY moved to Beaver, and then to Salt Lake City. Though their family fate had been cruel, they knew the mockery that lies in much money. Several of Lute Lawson's gambling speculations were successful and brought him wealth. He opened a mine. He dealt in real estate. He speculated in potatoes and beet-sugar. He financed a hotel. And then with a tithe of his fortune he bought back the old home ranch again

because Mabel wanted to return there.

The trail past the door was now graded and surfaced. Auto stages rolled by during the summer months bearing tourists to the wilderness brinks to stand and look into these unimaginable chasms caused by cataclysmic upheavals in forgotten ages. Families of tourists, wandering young and old, came by in their flivvers or sedans to have adventures and win experiences of their own.

Some of the passers-by heard the story of the Leaf Brand ranch. The natives over at the railroad end, who scattered over the country to prospect camps and cattle, sheep and produce outfits, knew the mystery of the lost boy.

The valley was beautiful to see, with its mirages and dancing sand maidens, with the colorful crystalline formations, its jagged summits, the charm of its curves whose vast sweep led into the arch of the sky.

Now and again passers-by would come to camp at the water-hole, and would call at the house for milk, or to buy melons; they were welcome, now, for the bitterness of the Lawsons had lessened. They could not be happy, but they did not add to the discomfort and embarrassment of others by unkindness. At the same time they were reticent, unsmiling, troubled by the unhealed wound.

THE Braytons came rolling along late one afternoon. Just north of the ranch a punctured tire forced a change, and so the family chanced to stop at the shadows of the near-by cottonwoods. The father, Robert, went over to the house to ask permission to camp. This was given, readily. When he returned to pitch his tent he found his wife feeling the forehead of Florence, their one child.

"She feels feverish," Mrs. Brayton said. "I don't know—"

In an hour, when the tent was up and the camp ready, the parents knew the girl was sick. Brayton went over to the house again.

"My daughter isn't feeling well," he said. "Has a fever or something. I don't suppose there's a doctor?"

"No," Lawson shook his head, "but perhaps—"

He summoned his wife.

"Sick? Your baby sick?" Mrs. Lawson exclaimed. "I'll run right over—perhaps I can help or something."

"LUTE," Mabel came back to say, hours later, "oh, I'm afraid! That's a sick girl. She's—just past twelve—just the age of Tubby! I don't know—"

"I'd better do something," Lute remarked, going over to his garage.

He could drive that sixty miles to town better than any one else. In three hours he was back with a doctor who knew what to do. Florence was in the ranch-house now. Two women, the distracted father, a wakeful dormitory of cowboys and a busy cook bespoke the anxiety of all hands.

The girl's condition was serious. The pulse, the breathing, the dry, puckering skin, the moaning uneasiness—no denying the significance of those signs.

"Good thing I'm here," Dr. Dessler muttered, reaching for his medicines.

Those were long and anxious minutes, hours. The sudden attack developed into a crisis. There was a moment of terrific doubt. But by the resources of science and faith the child's life was saved, while two mothers hovered by, clinging to the child.

"WHAT a beautiful country!" Mrs. Brayton exclaimed, when all was well again.

Mrs. Lawson nodded. She did love it. At the same time she knew how merciless it was. In spite of that rare charm and splendor it had grimly seized her child, carried her Tubby away leaving no trace. She had not been able to tell the story; now she whispered it to the other mother who could understand as none other might.

"No trace of him?" Mrs. Brayton gasped. "Oh, how terrible! What haven't you been through!"

They stared at the Trembling Haze Range veiled in bluish and purplish mist. The dark timber-belt, the flecks and vastness, the things so plain as to seem utterly distinct—and yet without one feature exactly what it appeared to be. In these barriers, or beyond them, some things were tangibly cliffs of massive stone, and some as baffling to distinguish as the flicker of a reflected sparkle cast back by the window of a castle in the mirage.

Brayton would have gone back to the main trail. Mrs. Brayton shook her head.

"All my life I've dreamed of seeing those natural wonders. I couldn't come so near and then turn back. Besides, Florence is all right now, a little weak yet, but perfectly all right, you know."

So they drove on over to the splendid phenomena. They came to the forests. They traversed the Rim Rock Road. They stared amazed at distances and chasms. They stood in awe amid enduring flights of geological fancy. They watched deer the mercilessness of hunters had not frightened at play and listened to the strange tickings and fanciful melodies which seemed to beat the measure of silences too profound to sustain themselves.

The Braytons camped out away from the public park and the tourist facilities. They wished to be on the far brim of the wilderness which was impenetrable to automobiles and looked to be almost beyond the attainment of men. One needed a real outfit of packers and wild-crafters to venture over those masses of broken stone.

The day was splendid. Night, with its stars of all colors, and the wailing voices of the desolation breaking the quiet, was glorious. The man and woman drew together, amazed by it. The girl was enthralled. None of them had ever seen or dreamed the like. The promise of hope was realized beyond the imagination.

Florence, breathless, walked over a little way to stand against a low boulder, enamored by the charm of new awakenings in her soul. And as she stood there in a moment of entranced emotion, she discerned huddled at a little distance a creature quite to be reconciled with all the rest of this desert fastness.

"Why—hello!" she exclaimed in friendly surprize, adding a bit awkwardly as a new form of greeting used hereabouts, "Howdy!"

The figure stirred uneasily, the small gravel grinding softly underfoot. A purring, growling, choking reply came dubiously in the deep blue darkness. She had seen the creature like a boy leaning against a mass of rock. Now she saw a swift, stooping, animal-like movement as the creature changed his attitude. Yet the gesture and the sound were friendly, unalarming—rather a timid readjustment for flight.

Just a boy, a youth, she could not distinctly see. She had seen Indian lads, watched them. This, she was sure, was such a visitor.

"Who are you?" she inquired gently.

For answer returned strange speech, low, a mixture of gutturals and whispering hisses. Just so the voices using the Indian tongue sounded to her. She knew he was friendly, then. He didn't know English, or preferred to talk in his native tongue.

"What's your name?" she asked.

"Tubby!" he answered, and then jumped back four or five steps, surprized by his own response.

"Tubby?" she repeated, "Why — Tubby! Tubby Lawson?"

"Tubby Lawson!" the visitor said, and then rapidly, "Tubby Lawson! Tubby Lawson! Tubby Lawson!"

She had heard the story of the lost boy who had disappeared just when he had begun to talk. This wasn't a baby. This was a gaunt, large boy who scuttled across the gravel and stood erect beside boulders—a restless, uneasy, grunting lad whom she could not see distinctly.

"Where have you been?" she exclaimed, and stood frozen at the growling loquaciousness of the night prowler.

"Mamma! Papa!" Florence called suddenly. "Here's a boy—he says he's Tubby Lawson!"

"What's that? Where are you, Florence? What'd you say?" came the father's heavy voice, and his quickening footsteps approached.

"Come here!" the mother's imperious voice cried.

At this the visitor suddenly went dashing back and up the face of the mountain, so fast and agile that the girl cried out in astonishment. Brayton came rushing to her side. He saw the dark shadow that grotesquely skirted up an apparently inaccessible steepness of bluff and circled back around points, uttering a gibberish as surprizing as his gait.

"Who is it? What is it?" Brayton demanded, glancing around in alarm to see what other tribesmen had intruded from the wilds.

"Why, I was just here," Florence declared. "All of a sudden there he was. He made funny talk when I spoke to him. I asked, 'What's your name?' and he answered, 'Tubby,' and I asked 'Tubby Lawson?' and he answered, 'Tubby Lawson! Tubby Lawson!' over and over again."

"Tubby Lawson?" Mrs. Brayton repeated. "Why it can't be! You don't think it is, do you, Robert?"

"I saw him—I don't know what to think!" he replied, unwilling to believe what he had seen with his own eyes. "Nobody could climb that cliff!"

"But, daddy, I saw him do it!" Florence declared pragmatically.

"I saw something, too," Mrs. Brayton said, "I couldn't make out real plain, though."

The three retreated to their camp and stood huddled against the machine. In whispers they discussed the impossible thing they had seen. They heard voices, indistinguishable, ethereal, weird—mimickings of wolf howling, low wailing of feline loneliness, and the cackling of a human throat struggling with unusual words.

"Tubby Lawson! Tubby Lawson!" came crying down the mountainside.

"Robert— Oh, Robert!" Mrs. Brayton choked. "He's grown up wild!"

"Nonsense!" her husband exclaimed, "he couldn't have lived. He was only three years old—had only just begun to talk!"

"I know," she cried, with overwhelming feminine logic, "that's what Mrs. Lawson said. They'd ask him, 'What is your name?' and he'd answer, 'Tubby Lawson! Tubby Lawson!' Just like that!"

"But—" he began explosively, but subsided.

Wolf howl and wildcat wail came down the mountain, and then:

"Tubby Lawson! Tubby Lawson!"

"That's him!" Brayton exclaimed. "Come—when we needed help Lute Lawson drove six score miles for Florence. We've got to go tell him about this!"

Leaving the tent and camping outfit where it stood, the three climbed into the automobile and, with lights blazing, they followed the road from the Fairy's Lookout around to the Accommodations and thence swiftly over the new highway, heading for the Leaf Brand ranch, with the mountains of the Trembling Haze sparkling and twinkling in the glow of the desert night.

CHAPTER V

THE TENT

THE wildling Tubby harked back through the years of his desert and timber-belt wanderings and experiences, groping for the origin of his sudden response to the inquiry, "What is your name?" His memories struggled to bridge the years. A voice unlike any in his country had reminded him of a far-away soothing, gentle, friendly tone. He had mocked cougars and bears, his voice had echoed the running, hunting cry of the wolf, and he knew the guttural growlings of warning and the fond whistlings of wild places. Now the clear, trained, cultivated tenderness of another kind of throat had touched his hearing, giving him such an exultant thrill as he had never before known.

Caution rather than fear drove him back and up from the immediate vicinity

of the novel creature who had spoken so confidently to him. Nevertheless he had learned to put distance between himself and questionable things. High up, from a lookout from which he could see what happened, he stretched on the ground and with squinting eyes stared down into the camping place with its curious glows and its strange shapes. He nearly had a fit when suddenly a flash like a little dawn close at hand filled the place with bluish light, and an instant later the humming vibration of throbbing power amazed and disquieted him.

He had seen three humans clamber into the bowels of a monster. The creature snorted and opened its eyes, throwing intense moonlight that illumined the precipitous slope and stretched across the earth for hundreds of jump-lengths. And then this two-eyed thing went lifting like a fast, enormous turtle along the valley, with a red light on its tail. Tubby could see the huge brute racing away. He watched it go to the horizon, fascinated. When it was gone he stretched to look into the lair these creatures—those three and the fearsome big one—had left behind.

The brave soul which had teased big bears and walked with cougars as well as run with a grisly wolf was not likely to leave unsatisfied the curiosity which was in his mind at sight of this deserted nesting place. He swung agilely down the rocks he had ascended and with his body partly turned, ready to leap for the heights again, he circled around the tent and snuffled the embers of the dying fire. He knew a place back in the mountains where the rock smelled a good deal like the monster which had snorted away, gliding over the earth with strange legs, like fish fins whirling.

He found things to eat. They tasted good. He pawed into odds and ends of articles. His hand picked up a cup by the handle and as he raised it, a shock of remembrance flung itself through him. He had picked up a similar shapely thing in the long ago. He sniffed at the cup. It was partly filled with water. His head tipped back as he brought it to his lips. He froze, his eyes bulging and jaws clenching—

For the first time in countless days and passing moons, far back beyond seasons of bitterness and spreads of white upon the high peaks, he had thrown his head back instead of forward to take a drink. And then a picture appeared before him—humans who walked erect, a mesa-wood, a plate, a cup, food in fragrant heap on a plate, himself sitting in something, bouncing up and down and then quieting to take such a cup to drink with his head thrown back, instead of leaning down to put his face into a running stream or still waterhole.

He lifted a strange flap, peered into the tent and entered. He sprang back alarmed when the canvas closed in behind him. He burst into the open starlight, walking around and around the odd den before he ventured in again. But this was a sweet, flower-like place. It was spread with odd articles. It had curious utensils the like of which he could just recall—dimly.

Here was the answer to the vague, unresting, vivid loneliness which through seasons and periods had ached unceasing in his soul. The spirit which had driven him hither and yon leading the Ghost from range to range, which had sent him to the tops of high peaks and made him wander along the ridge backs, his voice undulating and challenging the starlit loneliness, the delight he had felt when he heard what he knew was his own shout coming back, yet like some other's greeting, now recognized its own kind. Bear and cougar, wolf and echoes—this was like none of them. Rather here was the answer to forebodings and recollections, the reply to the wishes which had walked with him like shadows of the sun and moon.

He sat down in the tent, crossed his ankles, clasped his long arms across his shins and, resting his chin on his knees, he gave way to the weird fancies of a mind that had learned many of its processes from a wolf, yet went beyond all these things into the untutored, undisciplined

vagaries of realms that loved the stars and the huge shapes of the stamping grounds of things that live across the deserts and follow trails through timber belts. He had ventured into enormous spaciousness where there was no water. He had ascended to the bare, chill heights where not one spray of living thing grew.

The wolf had refused to go forth upon such foolish and unnecessary enterprises. No matter, for Tubby had gone on alone and brought back a most amazing assortment of growls and whistlings, lingo of a flexible throat with which to amuse a fond old scoundrel of a wolf. And because sometimes the human pup had on these rambles brought back news of good honey, edible fruits, plenty of game, the grisly materialist did not always jeer at such waste of energy and such inexplicably atrocious lies about the colors of birds being admirable and their songs good in themselves, regardless of whether one could catch and eat the birds.

Tubby had laughed, growling at himself. He had to, if he would justify his own enormous vagaries and nonsense. He had experimented and cultivated tastes. He had acted like a cougar, dragging in flesh which remained over when neither the wolf nor he could eat any more. A squirrel had never been more industrious gathering nuts than Tubby collecting piñons. When the wolf wanted such things he pawed into the stores accumulated by the lively little creatures. Tubby would do that, too, but also he hoarded for himself.

A thousand pictures fleeted before the wildling as he mused in the den of his own kind. His memory, like an echo, kept repeating "What is your name?" and he would answer, laughing, "Tubby Lawson!" And then he would throw his head back to laugh again. He heard a noise without, and rushed to look, nervous and alert. From far away he heard returning the faint reverberation. He uttered a loud, sharp, barking snarl and listened. It was, sure enough, an echo from the vast depths that spread down enormously just beyond where these cliff-loving, chasm-seeing, wildland-experiencing den-folks had their camp.

Tubby loved that immensity himself. He went pawing into the camp again. He upset and emptied out things to eat. They pampered a taste that had long been dormant. He bit into cans and out of them emptied soft, juicy streams. He cut his tongue licking them, and battered them thoroughly with a rock, and then licked or pawed up the attractive mess, where it was spattered about.

He had enough. He backed away. This was time for him to move from the scene. When bears came back to their dens or cougars returned to their caverns it wasn't a good idea to be caught cornered in their attractive lairs. Tubby backed up the cliff and sidled along the face of the mountain, looking back regretfully. The charming voice echoed in his ears. At the same time he had learned that pleasant voices had better be thought over. And besides, that squat, growling, terrific monster with eyes that cast a light ahead—Blue-e-e! Perhaps some other time, but not now!

Away yonder, with a sore tongue and hurt lips, but not with the least resentment, Tubby Lawson ambled and clambered into other and distant places. He had a surfeit to digest. Not only was his stomach full, but his mind contained an extraordinary fulness of adventure and observation. He was wild, and he knew when he had enough for the present.

He marked well the mountain and the spreading forest, the valley and the camp ground. When he was lonely again he would return to this scene. He would come back and listen again to that gay, lovely voice which had so bravely challenged him, demanding his name— Yes, he was Tubby Lawson. He lifted his shoulders, hopped, tossed his hands in an ecstasy. That's who he was, Tubby Lawson! Surely, he could say it! He could shout it, indeed! He had always known he was Tubby—Tubby Lawson! He just had neglected to tell that to the world! He made up for his failure now.

"Tubby Lawson!" he shouted, throwing his head back and opening wide his mouth, unashamed and unafraid, and so the echoes ran from mountain face to cañon place, "Tubby Lawson—Tub-b-by Law-w-son! Tubb-y-y-y-y Law-w-w-w-s-s-s-s-'n-n-n-n—"

He would cock his head to listen. What a joy of living it was, to have his name come echoing back from yon side of abysmal depths and running in circles up one cañon and back down the next! Coyotes thus challenged and announced their identity.

"Ha-a-a-a-a—Tub-by Law-w-w-son!"

CHAPTER VI

THE CAVE

"GOOD LORD, man! You mean it? You say he answered he's—he's Tubby Lawson?"

"I heard him— we all heard him!" Brayton declared.

Lute Lawson was a good man. He stood strong and stalwart, ever on his own feet, the kind of wildcrafter who plants his home by a waterhole on the savage horizon of civilization and then endures the shocking blows his temerity brings to him. He had stood grim and forbidding when, as the days went by and the years grew desolate, he had no word of his baby boy who had wandered forth to disappear in the sparkling glow of the Trembling Haze Range.

Now he melted down, his knees bending, his arms drawing up, and all the suppressed and conquered emotions of the enduring years took possession of him, body, mind and soul. He broke down. He buried his fists in his face, so strongly pressing them that for days his toughened hide showed the bruises.

"My wife!" he gasped. "What'll Mabel say? She's always believed it—I never did!"

At last he dashed shouting into the house. He awakened the cowboys in the dormitory. He disturbed the serene peace of the Leaf Brand Valley with the cheering of his happiness. He dashed to the corral to saddle his best horse. And there his wife came running to quiet him down, to tell him not horses but the automobile must be used for the long ride. The road was one that the odd whimsies of humanity, the strange man-love for beauty, had constructed through a country that offered surfeit for appetite for things to be admired. Colors and vastness. Abysses splendid in their ruggedness; magnificent mounds of nature that might well teach to humanity the object lesson of the beauty of endurance.

The distracted father was led around by his wife, the mother, who made him put on his heavy coat, for the night was cool; made him make sure the spare gasoline tank, an extra gallon of oil, the water canteens, and something to eat were packed on the ranch carry-all before they started. And only when she was thirty miles on the way did she discover that she had forgotten to put on her shoes and stockings. But Mrs. Brayton had spare moccasins for her at the camp.

The day had broken. The sky was royal purple, the east shooting forth long golden shafts of light among the openings between the mountains when the automobiles returned to the Brayton camp. Lawson and his men swarmed to look.

Sure enough, there were the footprints in the dust—long, slim human tracks, like his mother's, but with spreading toes—not a characteristic of a human foot. He had smashed cans of beans and peaches. He had prowled around the tent and upset a good many things in it. On a rock near by they found one of the aluminum nesting-kit cups with muddy fingerprints all over it. Mrs. Lawson discovered this and stood staring at it, as if the cup were more significant than all the other evidences of the presence of this youth who had run wild.

But the most skilled of the trackers could not trace his departure. They looked up the face of the precipice where the Braytons declared they had seen him going swiftly in ascent. The cowboys stared, their faces immobile. But for

the tracks in the sand and the stone-pounded cans they would have believed—yet not for the world admitting it or giving any sign of their doubts—that the Braytons were just lying or imaginative tourists. Travelers get that way, of course.

They went close to the frost- and wind-smoothed stone, examining the nubs and gouges, the sinks and swells. Foreman Decker glanced at one of the boys, who came over and looked. The Braytons were telling the truth. There was the stain of beans, peach juice and tomato seeds where a foot had curled its toes over a grab-place, and seven feet farther up they could see where a muddy hand, like a fly foot, had spread upon a roughness, and beyond this was a scrape where something muddy had dragged along.

"Oh, Lawson!" Decker called.

They all gathered around. The barefoot, bare-handed visitor had gone up that almost perpendicular face of rock. Higher up, they could see the shadows of overhangs and the layers of rock, shelves and points on which an agile creature might readily sit or stretch. Indeed, cougars and mountain sheep used somewhat similar places. And in the old days, cliff dwellers had traversed such heights in establishing their refuges and shelters.

Mrs. Brayton and Florence told Mrs. Lawson the exact details. Florence pointed to where she was standing. She indicated the place where the shadowy, skulking figure had worked along the wall and had stood among the boulders.

"I asked him 'What is your name?' " Florence declared, "and he answered 'Tubby Lawson!' just as plain as that. And then he gave a funny little jump and went scrambling up the rock, as though he was awf'ly surprized."

Mrs. Lawson nodded, staring at the plain barefoot prints on the ground. Her boy! He was alive! She knew it—she always had been sure of it! She knew now she would find him. Her certainty was pathetic as she waited there for days expecting the boy to return. She could not know—what civilized human could imagine it?—that the boy, his mind so filled to overflowing with new experiences, was for weeks wandering contented and playing with the new toys of his fancy far away in the fastnesses of mountains, ten thousand feet above the level of the cañon bottom.

Never had a body been in better condition than that lad's, and never had a healthier mentality gone away into seclusion to examine memories and weigh strange thoughts. Untutored in the human sense, wakeful and full of eager, racing notions, the lad had stretched beside a wolf with a full stomach. The wolf snoozed and dreamed; the boy dreamed and thought, using what ideas he had to crack the problems even he in his savage environment must mull over and peer into.

The mountains held their secret from the searchers. The wind blew out the barefoot tracks in the sand. Calls echoing into the spaces brought no answer but their own reverberations. Lawson organized a pack-train of ponies to go into the high, little-explored back-country beyond the barrier range of the Trembling Haze.

Good men, those desert rangers, and as they went up cañons and discovered water where no one had ever reported springs before, they came upon unmistakable traces of a wandering, prowling, investigating wild child, a boy who left his tracks in mud where the sun baked them, who caught birds and stuck their feathers up in rows and who made little heaps of pretty stones, and who dropped rocks from overhanging bluffs and then came down to feast upon the meat of deer he thus brought down.

Their patience rewarded their perspicuity. They studied the lay of the cañons and read the tracks they found, divining from these the varied habits of the runaway. They found where he had treed a cougar and stoned him—for fun. They found where he had run along the top of a wooded slope and rolled big cobbles and small boulders down at a family of several bears, tormenting them. They found where he dug into an ant-hill, and a deep

pawing on a ridge showed where he had tunneled into the rear of a wild-bee hive and robbed the swarm—safely. They learned a good deal about the youngster, but they did not find him.

They could not spend their lives thus ransacking the mountains for one wild boy. Besides, he was taking care of himself. He was performing extraordinary feats. Sitting around their campfires, they pieced together the fragments of their discoveries and studied the assortment from many angles.

"You know, Lawson," Dexter remarked, "I've an idea. Remember that campaign the Government trapper Billings carried on when he cleaned out the gray lobos over around the ranch and up into the Trembling Haze ridges? He figured he'd caught the big fellow, the Ghost, with poison. I don't believe it. Tell you why: He claimed the Ghost'd taken a poison pill in a dead squirrel. Never in God's world would the Ghost eat anything he didn't kill hisself—'less'n it was suicide. Course, Billings did get all the pack. You and I seen where he hit that female—a dandy shot at three hundred and better yards. Paunched her, we could tell by the color of the blood, kind of greenish. She died. You can tell that kid's been 'sociating with wolves the way he plagues the big cats, rocking 'em. Reg'lar wolf trick, treeing wild cats and cougars. You know that as well as I do. And the way he rolled rocks down on the bears. Same thing, exactly—bothering something. Don't it stand to reason, now?"

"I reckon," Lawson admitted. "But where are the wolf-tracks?"

"The Ghost was old. He died natural, prob'ly, somewhere back in these broken ranges. That left the boy alone, but able to take care of hisself. He was lonesome and he came down to the Brayton camp. That's all. When the girl called to him, not seeing very good, she s'prized him. I 'member myself asking that baby, 'What is your name?' and he'd wriggle all over, laughing, answering, 'Tubby Lawson!' When he answered her he was scairt of himself and went racing back up the range. You know a wolf'll come down to a ranch at night. Then he'll go away, to think it over. Or maybe it's a bunch of cows up a cañon or sheep grazing. Presently he comes back— We needn't to worry. When he's thought it over, he'll be coming in to look things over, mark my words."

"Yes." Lawson nodded, adding, "Sounds reasonable, Dexter."

They went into the course to the Leaf Brand outfit. They couldn't really hope to capture the wildling there. Human intelligence combined with the Ghost wolf training—well, they might see him. Out in a big flat they might have a chance of laying a rope on him. But not in a thousand years back in these broken lands, in the huge, shattered breaks of the inland country.

"He'll be growing lonely," the cowboys declared, more and more confidently.

THEY were riding along single file and unceasingly watching the skylines and the vistas on all sides when, in one of the tracts of variegated color and growths, Dexter's gaze discovered a spot near a waterhole where dripping seepage had during ages made a cavern. The day was old. The men were tired. At the same time they were not the kind who miss a bet, sparing themselves. Accordingly they threw down their packs and, while most of them made camp, Dexter and Lawson clambered up the steep and broken slope to look into that hole in the precipice.

It was quite a cavern. They knew instantly as they stood in the opening that it had been some creature's den, though now it was abandoned. Around a bend in a kind of hall they found a nest, or rather débris of brush and leaves crumbling into a powder. And here were numerous bones, antlers of deer attached to skulls and dismembered backbones with whitened ribs. Hair and curled-up patches of hide were unmistakable. And among these Dexter pawed with close scrutiny.

"Eh, Lawson!" he presently hailed. "Look't! What'd I tell you?"

He held up the great skull of a wolf. The teeth had been worn short and many were missing. The canine on one side had been broken short off.

"An old one!" Lawson nodded, turning the relic over and over in his hands, "And a big fellow!"

"And look there!" the ranch foreman indicated.

Not many things fool a cowboy-wildcrafter in his own country. There was a heap of pretties—stones and bones, quartzes and colorful things. Only an instinct for accumulation could have been responsible for such a collection. The two men carried out handfuls of the bones. In the waning afternoon sunshine they put these wastes under the close, exact scrutiny of their kind.

"I told you so!" Dexter said, as Lawson showed him the thighbone of a deer. All over the joint ends two wide teeth had gnawed and scraped, cutting into the soft bone enough to leave their marks. Where the wolf's teeth had cut, the scrapes were deeper and the points of the canines showed plainly. And some of the bones had been pounded with stone, as if they had been crushed in order that the marrow fat might be gotten at.

Sweat gathered on Lawson's brow. The altitude was high, the air dry and arid. The drops almost instantly evaporated, and where the man wiped his hands he left streaks in the saline dust. His boy, his son, had occupied this cave with an old wolf. The lobo had raised his child. Here the leader of the pack had presently died. The man had read in the newspapers that in India such things happened. One time he had read a darned interesting story about such a kid. It hadn't ever before occurred to him that a wolf might have a decent streak in him.

Now he held in his hands the head of one of a pack of wolves which had all been exterminated to save beef and mutton. Humans needed that meat, of course. Even there at that moment Lawson's good sense justified him.

The foreman watched the rancher whose hair was now gray over the temples —white spots left by those weary, desolate years when he had been helpless, imagining his Tubby wandering off in the scattering sage and lifting his voice in vain for his daddy and mother to come help him, feed him, make a safe bed for him in all this desert misery of thirst and privation. Instead the boy had taken up with a lonely old wolf.

The beast had not executed vengeance upon the manling. The brute must have known that poison, bullets, cunning steel traps, the relentless skill and vigilance of mankind had exterminated all his own family. And yet despite that frightful toll the Ghost had taken the baby with him. The lobo had fed the helpless youngster. When they could the two had run together. It needed little imagination on the part of the men to realize that when that old wolf's teeth had lost their sharpness and when his muscles had weakened and stiffened, the boy he had raised and trained in feral ways had lugged in the victims of his own superior skill, and perhaps had broken open bones with cobbles, not for himself, but to feed the marrow to a sick and aged foster-parent.

Things like that are in nature. Sometimes a human comes face to face with the most astonishing evidences of man's inhumanity to the lesser creatures—and the repayment is not always of the vicious, hungry, destroying kind.

Lawson went back into the cave. Dexter helped him gather the bones of the friendly wolf to tie them up together and put them tenderly on a shelf of the rock, building a little cairn of flat stones over them.

It was better for the animal's remains to stay here where he had been compassionate, yet it had taken quite a wrench on the man's part not to carry them to his own home out there in the valley and bury them in the place where favorite old borzois had been interred

after their careers of specialized sight-chasing and exuberant killing of the remaining coyotes—for fun! Wolves and a wild boy treeing snarling cougars for fun; coyotes chasing sheep for fun; packs of dogs with a special aptitude for killing jackrabbits and coyotes for sport of it; and men hunting for the joy of killing—Whoopla, but it's a sporty old world, at that! And so they leave reminders and build monuments for the pleasure they've had—heroically destroying!

That night the searchers of the mountains and valleys camped by the waterhole below the old wolf's cave. Here the object of their hunting had romped and run about. The men, sensitive to the feel of the wilds, looked beyond the shadows of their camp-fire flames and knew they were having glimpses of the passing of strange spirits. The Ghost wolf had become a wandering specter. They believed it. They felt the presence of the wraith. One of them cast aside his reticence and brazenly discarded his shame for his sentiments to say—

"You know, I hope to God that old scoundrel's happy!"

The others didn't laugh. They didn't even want to. They knew perfectly well this was a queer note to be sounded in a cow outfit, but they allowed it.

They sat up late, saying little. One by one, as they were inclined, they rolled up in their blankets and went to sleep. Lawson was the last to turn in. But finally he had thought it all out to the end. Then he found rest.

This was a fine place. Water, some standing timber, the sparkling, polished stone and the luminous heights of jagged mountains on all sides beneath the sky with its flashing stars of every color. Cold, silence, tang of high altitude. The repose of the sleepers was perfect, their breathing deep, their content the greatest in the world.

Then down out of the precipices swept a shrill, yelping, terrific sound—a shrieking, howling, vibrant voice of woe and challenge. The Leaf Brand boy-hunters bounded as one man to their feet and shook their heads as they gasped, trying to connect up their impressions with their slow wits.

"What's 'at?" somebody whispered nervously.

No one knew. A cry had awakened them all. They stared out into the crystalline gloom, backs to the fire-pit in a circle as natural as that formed by cows around their calves when wolves come tormenting around. They were all awake by the time the last echo darted away. They strained to hear something in the high silence.

Then they heard a stone rattling and bounding down the slope above the cavern. It clattered noisily and cracked loudly where it struck and bounded. They saw the spattering of sparks where the blows fell. The little boulder hurtled by to the southward and smashed like an explosion against a lower stratum.

Then they heard the weird call which had awakened them, farther away and higher up. None had ever heard such a cry before. No wolf or range bull, cougar or eagle, bear cub or fawn sounded like that, yet in that sound was the timbre of all these—bird, beast and wilderness; human, too.

"Oh, Tubby!" shouted Lute Lawson. "Woo-whoo!"

A shrill, short yelp answered—and no more. Never had silence been more vibrant, intense—the quiet of expectancy. All knew they had penetrated to the stamping ground of their quarry. They knew too that the wild boy had retreated higher and farther than they could reach. They searched for a few days, though with little hope. They could not catch him till he was ready to be caught. At the same time, they wondered whether for days Tubby Lawson had not skirted along the crests and peered from his skyline trails, watching, studying, wondering about them.

Before they went on their way, Lawson hung in the wolf's cavern some jerked venison and piled little heaps of loaf-sugar and tidbits of dried apples and bricks of seedless raisins, just to let the boy know

they were friendly—the most kindly disposed people, as regards the wild things, who ever had come anywhere near these remote mountainous regions.

As the party rode homeward, being short of supplies, they killed a deer to replenish their store. They watched the high places, the distant skylines, even more carefully than they had done before. They came thus to the farther side of the Trembling Haze ridge. They headed up into the pass they for years had called "Ghost Climb." There they looked down across their arduous trail. They discovered an active speck almost beyond the reach of their vision. Lawson's binoculars covered the curiosity.

"A bear—" he suggested. "It might be—"

The others couldn't quite make out, either, what beast or thing it was. Nevertheless they emptied their grub-bags and left trinkets and odds and ends along the pathway through the pass of Ghost Climb. And when they were well down the wide valley heading toward the ranch across the flats of the basin, they looked back again.

Sure enough, silhouetted against the blue of the sky they saw him—Tubby Lawson pacing back and forth on a mesa rock, anxious, doubtful, with a cobble like a football in his hand, balancing it as if he were tempted to start an avalanche after them for the fun of it, and yet for some reason hesitating to do so.

Mabel Lawson would be waiting for them. Everything was all right now. They had much news to report.

"We've got him coming!" they declared jubilantly.

CHAPTER VII

INTANGIBLE BONDS

PERHAPS it is easier for a boy to run wild than it is for him to come tame. Tubby Lawson had figured it all out as best he could. He had identified himself. He knew the answer to "Who are you?" after a fashion. He gave free play to his emotions and appetites, his memories and ideas as he raced up into the vast living-land over which he had ranged so restlessly these many years.

He enjoyed surfeit of excitement, meeting the animal of the pleasant voice, seeing the immense "turtle" into which the creatures ran like young snakes down a big snake's throat. He never would forget the astonishment he felt when those blinding eyes flared in the dark, illuminating the landscape like strong shining moonlight.

One day he heard horses, voices, the clank of metals, the echoing clatter of hoofs in a cañon. He investigated cautiously. The cavalcade of searchers, horses, carrying humans or packs, was immensely interesting. He watched them for days. He went down into the camps after they departed. He smelled the remains of fires and burned his fingers trying to pick up and hold the pretty coals carelessly left where a wind might carry flames into the scanty patches of timber. Despite the painful experience, he time and again pawed among those gay pink embers, for the beauty was worth the hurt.

In the manner of the investigating wild creatures, he kept silent while he was observing. Just so the cougar and the wolf, the bear and the buck-deer creep about, slowly, cautiously and noiselessly. But when he came to the familiar cavern where he had dwelt with the old wolf Ghost, he found that these strange visitors had raided his domain and pull-hauled his precious débris hither and yon. This was invasion. Tubby did not know what to make of it. He bothered cougars and bears like that. It was a joke. He ran in and out, dubious as he grew more excited, partly wondering and partly angry.

Tentatively he let out a yell of inquiry, yet in a blustering tone of challenge and defiance, with the result that the whole tribe of the visitors had jumped up like a flock of deer, and stood around in attitudes of alarm and astonishment.

This was delightful! *Whoe-e-e-el* He could hear their horses snort in the pasturing, and the men uttered exclamations

for all the world like gossiping bears. So he chucked over a rock to plague them some more.

Shouting, calls—he had his doubts. Tubby Lawson went climbing higher up and farther away. And then he heard his name come crying and beseeching up the slope—the father longing for his child!

The boy was too wild to return, but the voice tugged at his heart. He went chasing about watching the men and keeping track of their comings and goings. At night he came closer than they knew, listening to their snoring and catching the murmurs in their dreaming. He had heard his old wolf mate dreaming. He cocked his ears, trying to interpret their feelings. He backed away and scrambled to far nesting places, taking his own sleep.

When the cavalcade moved its camp he followed at the horizon, sharply observant. He tasted sugar, gnawed jerky, crinkled his nose over fried bacon—delighted. He knew raisins and dried apples were good for him. He trailed through Ghost Climb pass gathering up all those gifts to him, puzzling to understand such tributes.

He came in sight of a green rectangle, irrigated alfalfa. He could discern cattle, which looked good to eat, and horses which smelled better. And when night fell he crossed the open country to circle around the ranch, listening to the howling anxiety of the dogs which had all been tied up. Borzois, bred to kill for fun, they did not much like this restraint on their liberties, not understanding it at all. Every once in a while the investigator would hear somebody utter a roar, and even go out and pound the nuisances who wouldn't be quiet.

The visitor snorted his equivalent for the remark that this was all a queer business, and after a time he went into a retreat toward the mountains, looking back over his shoulders and pausing to bay with fervor and long-drawn unrestrained laughter, jeering, lonely and abandoned, loosing the questionings of his emotions across the landscape. Some one answered. Hoarse shouts and then a drawn-out echoing cry, sweet, far-carrying and thrilling, vested the landscape with its gratitude and its love.

Tubby Lawson nodded. That was all right. He knew it. Long ago he had heard exactly that. Chuckling mother happiness had spoken thus to him. Fine! But dogs and horses and inclosures and barriers of barbed wire fences, houses and a mob of humans and all kinds of things—too complicated and too much of everything! Tubby liked his surroundings to be simple and familiar. One was enough to have around at a time. Nevertheless, when he heard the quavering call of his mother he made reply, laughing, happy, full of appreciation. Just so he had heard the wolf shouting as Ghost passed by in the wind—a memory, a thrilling, beautiful recollection!

THE sky in the east was brightening. Dawn, sunrise, day were at hand before Tubby knew it was time. He bounded for the heights and the fastnesses. He stopped on a promontory, a cap high against the sky, to look down upon the confusion of tied-up dogs and fences. He threw a calf over his shoulder, for he needed food, turned around a corner of the Trembling Haze ridge to romp into the far fastnesses again to think it over. Wakeful, he rejoiced in his memories; sleeping he dreamed of his adventures. Sometimes he awakened in a terrific panic because a sweet sound, the soft, cloying, delicious voices he had heard—two of them—were reaching to envelop him, to seize him and hold him like deep snow against whose retardings he found it so hard to struggle, or like the red, murky river water whose suction held fast to him while in swimming, drawing him under unexpectedly, strangling his breath. Yet when he was fully awake, despite his fright and struggling, he was aware that to be made captive by such music was a tolerable, even desirable, experience, one worth adventuring.

By and by he headed away down the mountain ranges, scrambled through the enormous shatterings of the breaks and

skirted the brinks of doom—had he realized it—and returned to where he had found the camp of the humans who rode in enormous turtles. Pawing around in the loose snow, he found where warmth and pleasant fragrance had been. There was now no sign of the creatures who had walked erect. The tent, outfit and people were gone. He strained his ears to catch the sound of that lovely voice which seemed even now to ask—

"What is your name?"

"Tubby Lawson," he answered the echo of his memory, "Tubby Lawson! Tubby Lawson—Tub-by-y Law-w-w-w-so-o-o-o-n!"

The echoes brought his wail returning from the cañon depths; the echoes were wretched, baffling, bothering substitutes for the greeting which had been but was no more. He walked wailing and lonely in the cold wind, restless and circling about, leaving his tracks meandering across the level. He shivered, but less from the wintry cold than from the aching dejection of his heart and soul as he prowled about his enormous domain, unwilling to submit to the ancient, ominous discipline of enchaining voice of fellow being, and yet suffering for want of that musical bondage. The words, "What is your name? What is your name?" enveloped him as if he were held in the embrace of a cougar or held by a wolf's jaws.

Some days he found it difficult to find meat to appease his hunger. That was nothing to the avid desires clamoring in his heart and soul. He could fill his stomach, but what would ease this noisy torment which plagued him as he had never teased cougar or tricky bear? He wailed in the misery of suffering, continually hearing the echo of a haunting voice.

As if being played like a mountain trout on the end of a long line, he circled and rushed about. Despite the cold of stinging winds, he went to enormous heights, only to dash, leaping and slipping, to cozier depths of forests and to shelters from the gales, finding that the very comfort of his body became the opportunity of his wretched emotions. He would never yield to the siren urge that drove him. Yet when the flowers bloomed, when the wind was warm and living food was to be had everywhere, the wild youth crept nearer to the place he knew of old—the cottonwoods, the waterhole, the yelping chained-up dogs, the horses, cattle and men. He resisted all these.

What brought him steadily, and hopelessly resisting, nearer, was a singing voice that he heard in the early evening—the gay lullaby of a mother who knew in her heart that her baby was near. She had sung thus to him as he was rocked to sleep in her arms.

He came closer. The dogs grew uproarious. They did not matter. One sharp snarl and they subsided, whimpering, into their kennels. At his savage, warning growl the song broke off short. They had heard him in the house.

Low exclamations:

"What's that?"

"Sh-h-h— Go on, Mother—sing!"

The intensity of the mingling voices warned the acute listener that they knew he was near. He bounded away a half mile, perching on a fence-post as he waited, struggling with the temptation that was luring and betraying him. Presently he leaped down and stooping, furtive, sometimes on three paws, sometimes creeping and crawling, he at length paused to stand erect once more against the moon-shady side of the corral.

He heard the woman's voice again, breaking, quavering, anxious. The magic was gone. The happiness had given way to eagerness and doubts. With a rush, the listener leaped away, and ran bounding back into the mountains again, disillusioned and for the time released from the enthraldom of his memory-longings.

And yet he could not keep away from the other Place of a Voice. He knew no one was there. All it had for him was a memory. Still, a recollection could be more precious than the actuality. It was less dangerous, not alarming, and it soothed his feelings. He shambled off across the country, pausing to pick up a yearling deer, to scare a family of cougar

kittens and to throw rocks at a bear.

He easily gathered enough and too much to eat. He readily outwitted game and fish. He had long hours of a full stomach in which to dream and watch the world's affairs. He had places to visit, scenes of kills and pursuits, playgrounds where he had romped with the wolf, pedestals, the views from which were unusually soothing to his feelings, where hues and shades in enormous masses and rocks of huge proportions loomed before the backgrounds of sunlit, interminable crystalline sky. And at night he could look overhead and see myriads of twinkling stars whose sparkling at times seemed gay and laughing and at other times seemed forbidding, as if their stares had no friendly intentions.

He knew the humans, the tent and everything else were gone from where the voice had brought rushing forth his name. An evil pursuit was dogging his footsteps, part and parcel of his memory. The fascination of the ranch reached its tentacles to surround him. He did not wish to go back there. Nevertheless the demand clamored at his ears, filled his nerves with twitching anxieties. He turned to snarl at the intangible, oppressive thing. He was fleeing from his desire, literally and unsuccessfully. If he went back something would happen, though he could not surmise what.

Thus he rushed headlong while he turned his eyes looking backward, for behind him lurked the jeopardy of invisible pursuit. He bounded around boulders and skirted along the foot of high precipices. He walked wolf-like in clean quartz sand because it cut the mud and dirt from his feet. He rolled over and over in it, for it scratched his skin delightfully. He scurried swiftly, trying to outrun and outwit his impulse to go to foregather with those who sang and called his name.

He rounded an angle of rock buttress and the next instant found himself right among the humans again.

"It's Tubby Lawson!" he heard the memorable voice.

He shrank to the ground, part cat, part wolf—crouching low. He would have fled, only he could not. He was dazed to find himself so distraught and careless, lack-witted. The girl approached with light footsteps, neither hurrying nor hesitating, not blustering or anxious, but talking in a low, steady, irresistible strain.

"That's a good boy—that's a fine boy! How are you, Tubby Lawson? You needn't be afraid. Where have you been?"

That very manner of cool assurance transfixed the wildling, baffled as he was in his two-way mind. Florence Brayton had heard a hundred suggestions made—lasso, bear traps with the steel jaws padded, pens and round-up methods. She went to the poor kid and rested a hand on his matted, hairy head. She felt him shudder and heard him whimper, alarmed and paralyzed with bewilderment, fascinated by a gentle, friendly mind.

Rifle in hand, Brayton sat watching—ready. There was no telling what whimsy might afflict the wildling. Mrs. Brayton after an hour slowly went to meet the huddled, crouching creature whose carelessness had brought him within the power of voices which held him more tractable than thongs or cage could have done. The night was cold, and they threw a heavy blanket cautiously and gently over the smooth, bare skin, unaware of the lad's capability to endure even frost. They brought him a cup of water. Little they knew the magic of this!

He took it in both hands, held it before him like a squirrel holding a cob of corn, staring at it, then rolling his eyes at the bystanders. He drank. Back flooded his baby-memories. Just so he had held cups, long ago. They were all right.

"What is your name?" Florence inquired in another inspiration.

"Tubby Lawson!" he barked sharply, and then turned his head in confusion.

"Want to go home, Tubby?" Brayton asked casually.

"Home! Home!" he crinkled his lips

and twisted his tongue, repeating the word.

"Home to mamma?" Mrs. Brayton added eagerly and tenderly. "Want to go home to mamma and daddy?"

Memory played a pretty feat. A day had been, long ago, when he had been frantic, frightened, begging to go home. He had been a brave, strong kid. He had whimpered about it, but he had not screamed or cried. Perhaps this was why the lonesome wolf who happened along had been attracted to the manling. Lost, weary, hungry—but brave! He had gone with the wolf, confident. And yet he had wanted mamma; he had called for daddy; for years he had not remembered those words.

Now he heard and recognized them. Dumbly he turned to stare at the woman.

"Mamma!" he whispered. "Daddy?"

"All right—come on!"

The woman reached her hand to take his. Impulsively and with confidence he reached to meet it. He jogged along beside her toward the monster. She led him into it, and he found it hollow, a cave. He jumped when he saw flash ahead the white cloud of light. He shrank as he felt the motion, the trembling of vibrations and the shock of confused, rhythmic sounds. But a boy who had ridden the backs of hounds and ridden a wolf would not be afraid, especially as he remembered something like this in his experiences of the past.

The murmuring voice continued, slow, distinct, sure.

"Home — daddy — mamma — Tubby Lawson!"

It was all right—even the rushing by of forests and the swinging around of bends, the jouncing and the strange swiftness. He watched the passing of shadows and the magical appearance of things and their equally surprizing vanishing like birds darting away, shadows seen out of the corner of one's eyes.

They came to the ranch. They heard the uproar of dogs, the shout of a human voice and the cool, steady answering from these companions who accompanied him.

"What's that? *Tubby!*" the wildling heard, and then a coking, gasping effort to speak.

Another strangling effort and a husky voice cried:

"Oh, Mabel, come here! They've—they've brought Tubby!"

"Tubby!" the shrinking, shivering visitor heard, and again repeated, "Tubby!"

"Mamma! Mamma!" he exclaimed intuitively, and it might have been the singing cry of a bird, the sound was so high and tender.

He rose up and went out over the side of the car with a light, high, reaching, four-handed leap. The woman, coming forward, hesitated for one awful moment as she saw the creature landing low and coming toward her, on all fours, wild, wolf-like. The impression he gave was terrible to this mother rushing to welcome her son. But in his next leap he was partly erect, and then he stood before her, tall, stalwart—a dark, beautiful figure in the bright glare of the headlights, those awful eyes which he did not even notice now that this ingratiating woman was there.

"Mamma! Mamma!" he cried, and the cowboys who had heard the commotion and were coming on the run stopped short suddenly, gulped and turned around to go back to the dormitory for a while. Most of them had seen the mother's prolonged and patient anguish. They couldn't stand it, now, to see her joy.

CHAPTER VIII

TUBBY COMES HOME AGAIN

LUTE LAWSON stood, tall, slim, calm, staring at the midnight scene of his wild boy's return. The moment to which he had looked forward so long had arrived. His wife's ejaculations, the odd guttural, whispering voice of the stalwart youth gripped him in a strangling hold. Had he desired to, he could not have attempted to move. Being a desert man, his eyes glanced swiftly around at intervals, so he saw the Braytons who had

accomplished this inevitable miracle. He wondered how they had done it, and grinned ever so little, his eyes blinking, as he saw Florence, the brave girl, shrinking against her parents, her face averted.

"My boy! My boy!" Lawson was saying, unconsciously.

The incredulous ears of the homecomer heard him. The shaggy head suddenly went up—high and huge. The face, smooth and like some wonderful metal in the star-reflections, turned about; across the little space came the wide-eyed glance of marvelously developed eyes. For a full minute, as his hands stroked his mother's quivering shoulders, the boy gazed at the man. In that age of waiting Lute Lawson knew again the desolation of doubt.

Then with a reassuring caress—he'd be back!—Tubby with bird-like swiftness darted to the man, lifting high his hand—higher than his father's head. Just so when he had been a baby he had lifted his hand, gravely, to shake with his father's. Lute needed no interpreter to understand a memory which had bridged the years. The boy stood, his confusion obvious, as he lifted his chin to stare up at that high hand. He turned to gaze at his father's face, which was so unexpectedly near the level of his own—still the father was the taller by an inch or two.

Again he looked up at his high arm and hand, held rigid as he studied them. He was for a moment embarrassed to find h mself making so natural and impulsive a mistake. Then he threw back his head and laughed.

It was human laughter—gay, full-throated, but nevertheless filling the listeners with the terrible realization of how fortuitous had been the lad's escape from a doom of irredeemable animality.

All that he had known returned to him now. He skipped around, bounding gaily as he sought the old familiar places, the shore of the waterhole, the little angles of the buildings in which he used to play-hide, and amazed the cowboys and families as he leaped to the tops of the corral timbers to walk around the frantic horses, mocking their fears. When he passed the kennels the dogs swarmed out on their chains, standing on their hind legs, and he looked curiously over his shoulder as he strolled in silence, alert. Then, with a sudden low, rumbling growl, snarl, warning, he drove the whole pack to their covers, where they lay whimpering.

There was no sleep for any one the rest of that night. Tubby rummaged about the place. The Braytons and Lawsons went into the house to sit before the fireplace. The cowboys stood in a group near the dormitory, whispering among themselves. Tubby walked around them, on all fours, scuffling, and then erect, on his toes, regarding them curiously.

"Tubby! Tubby!" they greeted him with anxious respect, and as he gave sudden, jerky leaps in and out, they added, "Tubby! My Gawd — Tubby!" their voices on a rising inflection. But his behavior was that of play, a game of wolf and cougar, bear cub and baby-boy.

There was a time, just before the sun rose, when Tubby perched on the big rock at the waterhole irrigation-ditch overflow and seemed about to retreat across the open desert toward the Trembling Haze Mountains. He was for a time of two minds. But as he looked around he saw that nothing held him. He was free to go—physically. No inclosure, no chains, no hand-hold kept him.

When he swung down from the boulder he circled around the outfit, in and out among the buildings, and then paused for a moment at the door-sill of the cowboys' dormitory. With a chuckling laugh, remembering how he used to go there in the days of years before, he entered and, climbing to the darkest upper bunk in the corner, he stretched out to sleep.

His mother followed him. He was already in a doze. She picked up a blanket from one of the other bunks and spread it over him. He shivered ecstatically in his semi-consciousness.

"Mamma!" he whispered.

"My boy—my baby boy!" she whispered. "You've come back to me. I knew you would. Oh, I knew it!"

Continuing MEADE MINNIGERODE'S

Serial of

Royalty in the Young Republic

Cockades

THE United States of America was a young country, full of enthusiasm, of sympathy for the oppressed. People wore the tricolor for their oppressed French brethren; later, when the king and queen had been driven to death, they wore white for the harried royalists of France, and gave royalists refugees a welcome.

One young refugee was received in Greenwich outside the town of New York. He was a striking lad, called Frances Vincent; but no one except Axel de Fersen, who had brought him to America, and Roger Moore, to whom de Fersen had told the secret and who was guarding certain papers for the boy knew his real name.

But others took an interest in the boy. Royalists in Philadelphia—wearers of the white cockade—took turns in coming up to visit him. And there was one Ducros, a spy of the French republicans, who tried to trap Francis Vincent's friends into a pest house at the time of the plague.

Then one day Mr. de Croisic, a royalist journeying from Philadelphia to visit his liege lord, saw the lad at Princeton in the hands of kidnappers. Alone, de Croisic tried to rescue the boy, but failed.

And in Greenwich Roger Moore received a note saying that the boy had run away to sea.

CHAPTER VII

BLACK COCKADES

THE late afternoon of May 7, and an enormous mob pushing and squeezing its way into Cameron's Tavern at Philadelphia. Young men, mostly—members of the Philadelphia Band of Associated Youth who were to dine in state at the inn that evening and a large representation in uniform from

Macpherson's Blues, the crack Federalist militia company. It was, in fact, essentially a Federalist gathering. So dense was the jam that the Duke de la Roche and Mr. de Vendome, who were there by appointment to see Mr. de la Motte, had the greatest difficulty passing through the door and into the tap-room.

"These young persons all look very fierce," the Duke remarked. "Has some one written another pamphlet?"

"It's the Federalist young men's political club," Mr. de Vendome told him. "Probably a war meeting."

Some one was going to speak.

It was Captain Macpherson himself, the commander of the Blues, who had jumped up on a table and called for silence. He had a paper in his hand and under his arm he carried a large bandbox.

"Gentlemen of the Associated Youth!" he cried. "My gallant comrades of the Militia Company of Foot! Some of you may have read Peter Porcupine's proclamation this morning, suggesting that all true Americans mount the Federal cockade."

"Hear hear!"

"Some of you I dare say have not forgotten the proclamation issued by Citizen Adet, the late Minister from France, calling on all Republicans and French sympathizers to mount the tricolor cockade in the last presidential election?"

The Associated Youth had not forgotten. A storm of boos swept the room.

"To —— with Adet! Down with the Diplomatic Blunderbuss!"

"I see that you remember," Captain Macpherson smiled. "Well, gentlemen, on the eve of war with France—"

A perfect gale of cheers followed the boos.

"On the eve of war with France, I say, let us reply to Citizen Adet's proclamation by adopting Peter Porcupine's here—" he waved the paper and handed it to those in the front row—"and let us mount the black Federal cockade, Washington's cockade, the American cockade!"

By all means! But where could they be had? Captain Macpherson opened his box.

"Here are your cockades, gentlemen. Help yourselves!"

He began tossing the little circles of black ribbon out into the crowd. All over the room young men shoved forward to secure the emblem and fix it on their round chapeaux or under the loop of cocked hats. The Duke caught a handful flying through the air and put one in his own hat along with the white cockade which he always wore.

"Science tells us that there is fundamentally no difference between white and black," he observed to Mr. de Vendome. "As for the proclamations, the only difference between them is that Adet's was written by a Frenchman while this one is written by William Cobbett, an Englishman! And so let us mount the black Federal cockade, Washington's cockade, the American cockade!"

As they pushed their way upstairs they could hear the hawkers already at it in the street.

"Cockades! Federal cockades!"

"Good evening, gentlemen," Mr. de la Motte greeted them. "Pray be seated. Ah, Monsieur le Duc, our friends downstairs have enrolled you, I see."

"My good de la Motte," the Duke assured him, "any measure calculated to annoy the Jacobin rabble has my hearty support. If that end can be accomplished by wearing a black ribbon in my hat I shall certainly do so."

"But it is the emblem of the war party," Mr. de Vendome reminded him. "The war against France!"

"Oh, as to that," the Duke retorted, "it leaves me cold, this war. You do not imagine that I care a *sou* what becomes of the Directory? Bonaparte and Talleyrand and that crew—they are not France! And now, de la Motte, what news have you?"

"Gentlemen," Mr. de la Motte informed them, "I have at last received a communication in cipher from Mr. de Colignac in Switzerland."

"Indeed! And what does he say?"

"Mr. de Colignac says a great deal. He thinks that we are all quite mad and he does not believe that His Majesty is in America. He has conferred with the *émigré* Princes—I mean His Majesty's uncles, the Comte de Provence and the Comte d'Artois—and they are quite certain that it is impossible."

"That does not surprize me," the Duke remarked. "After all, if there is ever a Bourbon restoration in France this boy will be very much in the way of Provence and Artois. They have their ambitions, those runaway princes of the blood! And so de Colignac does not believe us?"

"No."

"That does not surprize me either," the Duke laughed. "The men of that family are always so obstinate. De Colignac never believes anything until be bumps his nose against it. I think that is why his nose is so flat at the end. What else does he say?"

"Well, after using up two pages saying he does not believe it, on page three he says that if His Majesty *is* in this country and we are convinced of it, he is prepared to come to America and look at him. And he says something else which is important. He says that if in the boy's effects there were to be found a certain locket on a chain which he describes, then he would be certain he is the Dauphin. Something Mr. de Colignac himself gave him."

"Excellent. And what does he say on page four?"

"He wants to know if there is a respectable hotel at Philadelphia!"

"Tell him that the hotels at Philadelphia are all extremely respectable. Tell him that at the Assemblies at Oeller's no gentleman in boots or colored stockings is allowed to dance. Tell him that in Mrs. William Bingham's house on Third Street there is a white marble staircase. In fact, tell him from me not to be an old fool!"

They were still laughing at him when Mr. de Vendome heard some one on the stairs.

"Listen!" he exclaimed. "Some one is coming."

"This time at least it will not be a fever inspector!" the Duke observed.

The door flew open, and it was Mr. de Croisic, terribly pale and dusty.

"God save us!" Mr. de la Motte cried. "What's happened to you? Why aren't you in New York?"

Mr. de Croisic caught at the chair which Mr. de Vendome pushed forward for him, and stared at them with feverish eyes.

"Monsieur the Dauphin!" he gulped. "Monsieur the Dauphin— It was at the Princeton relay— There's a man called Ducros at the Red Bonnet— I'd have been here sooner, but we ran into a ditch—"

The Duke threw up his hands.

"Now take your time, de Croisic," he suggested. "In affairs of this sort always begin at the beginning. Sit down and tell us what has happened. Give him some brandy, de la Motte. He looks as if he needs it."

"Are you hurt?" they asked him.

"No, just my head, I'm all right. Listen—Monsieur the Dauphin has been kidnapped."

"Great God! Are you out of your mind?" they shouted. Mr. de Vendome records that he for one did not believe a word of it at first.

Mr. de Croisic drank the brandy, two big stiff swallows which seemed to do him good, and then he began to tell them all that had happened the morning before at Princeton. About the men in the coach with their talk of the Red Bonnet, and the attempted rescue which had failed so miserably, and the Spanish Minister.

"To —— with the Spanish Minister!" the Duke exploded. "Are you telling us that those ruffians have got the Dauphin?"

"His Majesty is here at Philadelphia," Mr. de Croisic repeated. "At the Red Bonnet, unless they have already taken him away somewhere. We must go at once and get him!"

"Go at once and get him!" the Duke was raving. "That's easily said, go at once and get him! How the —— are we going to do it?"

The others were staring at each other speechlessly. Mr. de Croisic hid his face in his arms on the table.

"I did what I could," he whispered. "They were four to one."

The Duke stood up.

"My very dear friend, you are not to blame," he touched him on the shoulder. "Do you realize what this means?" He turned to Mr. de la Motte. "As de Croisic has just said, this is a political kidnapping. Those men know he is the Dauphin. They are planning to take him back to France. We haven't a moment to lose."

"No," Mr. de la Motte agreed. "If they clap him aboard of one of Stephen Girard's ships we'll never see him again."

"Yes, and the Red Bonnet is just around the corner from Girard's wharf," Mr. de Vendome happened to know. "By Gad, Monsieur le Duc, we must do something quickly!"

"Just a moment!" The Duke appeared to have an inspiration all of a sudden.

He went to the door and opened it, and the racket from the banquet of the Associated Youth below filled the room. They seemed to have worked themselves up into a tremendous state.

"Listen to me," the Duke commanded his friends. "You've heard the rumor that's been going around that the Republicans were planning to burn the frigates in the Delaware?"

Yes—and murder President Adams, for that matter.

"Very well." The Duke reached in his pocket and produced his handful of black cockades. "Each of you put one of these in your hat, and come with me."

"But what are you going to do?"

"I am about to make a ridiculous speech to a crowd of intoxicated young patriots, which you are to applaud violently. "

They followed him downstairs and out into the garden of the tavern. The young men were at long tables under the trees. Whatever food they might have consumed, the punch bowls had certainly been well emptied. Almost everybody was gloriously drunk, pounding the table, toasting the Blues, bellowing three songs at once.

> "Our sheet anchor's sure,
> And our bark rides secure,
> So here's to the toast
> We Columbians boast—
> The Federal Constitution
> And the President forever!"

Crash. Glasses and dishes. They said afterwards that the breakage was greater than at the banquet given by the City Troop to General Washington.

The Duke climbed up on a barrel.

"Gentlemen!" he addressed the nearest tables. "Americans! Patriots!"

Table after table welcomed the description.

"Will you allow the safety of your homes—nay, of your fair city—to be threatened by a band of dastardly Republican Jacobins?"

No, by ——! The Associated Youth became instantly vociferous.

"Will you allow the destruction of your frigates in the Delaware?" the Duke went on. "Will you sit here and permit this outrage against your navy?"

No, a thousand times no! The Associated Youth were all up on their feet, bristling and indignant.

"Will you allow your beloved President to be murdered in his bed?"

The roar from Cameron's garden hit the stars. The President? Murdered? The young men came thundering over the tables, brandishing their sticks. Where were the miscreants who dared such a thing?

"At this very moment," the Duke assured them, "some of the most dangerous Jacobins in the city are preparing to burn the frigates and assassinate the Executive!"

"Where, where?" the Blues and the Associated Youth were all howling. "Where are they—take us there!"

"Come with me, gentlemen," the Duke suggested, and led the way out of the tavern.

So the great Philadelphia Black Cockade parade of May 7, 1798, seems to have

originated. The Associated Youth, the Blues, members of other anti-Republican organizations, and every Federalist in town running down his front steps to join the tramping procession. A magnificent harvest for the peddlers of black ribbons.

In two sections. For while the van followed the Duke and his friends down to the river front those in the rear turned off toward the President's house, with no very clear idea perhaps of what was going forward except that they were to serenade Mr. Adams.

> "Columbians all, the present hour
> As brothers should unite us;
> Union at home's the only way
> To make the nation right us.
> Yankee Doodle, guard your coast,
> Yankee Doodle Dandy!
> Fear not then nor threat nor boast,
> Yankee Doodle Dandy!"

He heard them coming, and when they arrived he was on the stoop to receive them, with a black cockade on his hat.

DUCROS was in an upstairs room of the Red Bonnet, listening to the glib explanations of his three underlings and getting angrier and angrier at their delays and their stupidity. The boy was safely stowed away, tied into a chair in the back chamber which looked out on to the roof of the shed, but the events at Princeton were excessively annoying. And Ducros was not in the least impressed by the cock-and-bull story which they were trying to tell him.

"It was de Croisic, he came riding into the tavern yard with a lot of other men," they insisted. "If we had not fought like lions the boy wouldn't be here now."

"Imbeciles! Camels!" Ducros swore at them. "You are jackasses, not lions. And if you had not travelled like snails the boy would have been here long ago. Don't try and lie to me. I told you not to stop at the Princeton relay in the first place. And now, thanks to your bungling, the whole Philadelphia nest knows what has happened."

"But we've brought you the child," they objected. "Be reasonable, Ducros!"

"Puh!" he retorted. "Yes, you've brought me the child, and every royalist *émigré* in town after him, probably, you lumps of candle-grease! We must take him away from here at once."

"Oh, why not kill the brat and be done with it?" one of them suggested.

"Vermin! Do you take me for a murderer?" Ducros was extremely offended in his report that any one should have thought him capable of such a thing. "I represent the French Republic, and it is for the Republic to say what is to be done with Charles Louis Capet. No, we must keep him in safe hiding until we can get our hands on that package at Greenwich, and then send him to France."

"Bah, what does it matter about the package?" they asked him.

"As long as the package exists there can be another Dauphin," Ducros told them. "Almost any child will do, but it is the child with the proof who is dangerous. You would see that for yourselves if you were not such imbeciles. I, I am an agent of the secret police, and I understand these matters."

"Oh, you are not so fat yourself," they laughed at him. "If you had only waited to see what Moore did with it, we might have had a better chance of finding this sacred package!"

Ducros was terribly annoyed. It was just like him, of course, to nourish his injured pride and put it all down in his account instead of ignoring these disparaging comments. A thoroughly simple person at bottom, always recording exactly what was said to him and exactly what he replied with the methodical persistence of mediocrity

"You bunch of tripe!" he roared at them. "How could I stay there at the window with the dogs coming after me! I am not a magician to make myself invisible. As for this package, never fear. I've got people at work. Servants at Moore Mansion and at Brook Field, and at Jumel's too. If I don't know yet where it is, I know a great many places where it isn't."

"You're a magnificent fellow!" they

assured him. "If we're to look in every place where it isn't before we find the one where it is, he'll be an old man, this Dauphin—good Lord, what was that?"

The street was suddenly filled with outcries. There was a great pounding of sticks on the shutters below, a tremendous shouting and tumult. Ducros jumped to the window.

"Thunder of God!" he cried. "The house is surrounded. The Black Cockades are storming the place. Hold the stairs!"

But there was no question of holding the stairs. The Black Cockades were already swarming all over the ground floor, smashing their way in at the windows. In another second they were pouring up the stairs, blocking the passageway. In the front rank of the mob Ducros recognized Mr. de Croisic and Mr. de Vendome.

"Out the back way!" he yelled. "Get the child!"

Ducros leaped for the door, but two of his men did not follow him for they had gone down under Mr. de Vendome's bludgeon.

"Here are your Jacobins!" Mr. de Croisic was shouting, as he plunged after Mr. de Vendome into the back room, while the crowd milled around its two victims, all huddled in a crimson spatter on the floor.

And in the back room Ducros and the other man were gaping open-mouthed at an empty chair and some loose cords, and a raised window.

"Great ——!" Ducros roared as Mr. de Vendome came bursting in. "The child is gone! He's gotten away through the window!"

He had just time to pick up the chair and throw it at Mr. de Vendome, and dive out of the window himself on to the roof of the shed and into the back lot. Mr. de Croisic and the other man were rolling around on the floor pounding the life out of each other. Mr. de Vendome cracked the man's skull open with the broken chair and dragged Mr. de Croisic to his feet.

"Do you understand?" he panted. "The boy is gone!"

"That man," Mr. de Croisic was trying to tell him, "that man who went out of the window! Did you recognize him? That was the fever inspector who came last year—"

"Never mind fever inspectors!" Mr. de Vendome pushed Mr. de Croisic into the front room. The two corpses were lying where they had fallen, the mob had gone. "We've lost the boy—some one else has got him or he's running around the town somewhere— Find the Duke—"

There was a great hallooing outside, Mr. de la Motte's voice calling their names. Mr. de Vendome leaned out of the window and shouted to him:

"The boy is not here. We've lost him —there are only dead men in the house!"

"Come down! Come down!" Mr. de la Motte was yelling at the top of his lungs.

Mr. de Croisic grabbed his friend and pulled him to the stairs.

"Smoke!" he cried. "They've fired the place—get out of here!"

The old tinder box of a house was blazing, smoke pouring up now from the ground floor. Mr. de Croisic jerked Mr. de Vendome after him down the stairs and out of the front door into the arms of Mr. de la Motte.

"The boy!" he gasped. "He's gone!"

"Never mind, now," Mr. de la Motte told them. "Come away quickly! There's going to be trouble here—we're best out of it."

They ran up the street—away from the riot and conflagration which were to keep that section of the town awake half the night fighting the fire back from Stephen Girard's warehouses. At the next corner they found the Duke.

"Gone?" he asked them, his white face set and masklike. "Have we lost him?"

"We've lost him," they explained. "And so have they. He was already gone when we all burst into the room."

The Duke threw up his hands.

"Perhaps he will turn up at Greenwich," Mr. de la Motte suggested. They pretended to believe him, since there was

nothing else to do. They hurried back to Cameron's and up to the Marquis's room.

"What was it you started to tell us, de Croisic, about the Spanish Minister?" the Duke inquired suddenly, after they had fallen wearily into their seats around the table.

Mr. de Croisic related the episode. Why?

"Because there is something very queer about all this," the Duke informed them. "Don Carlos was not at Princeton to visit the College."

How so?

"Because he followed de Croisic back to Philadelphia. He must have left Princeton almost immediately."

How did the Duke know that?

"Because this evening, just now, while I was waiting for you at the corner, I saw him. A carriage passed me coming from the waterfront and under the street lantern I recognized him."

But that was very extraordinary, Mr. de Croisic objected. What would Don Carlos de Yrujo be doing on the Philadelphia waterfront when he was supposed to be at Princeton?

"I'll tell you," the Duke replied. "Do you know what I think? The Dauphin will not reappear at Greenwich. He did not escape from that upstairs room. He was kidnapped again, by way of the window and that shed roof you describe. If you want my opinion, the Spaniards have got him. They found out about him and they got wind of this Jacobin kidnapping and they were probably watching the whole performance. They're like ferrets, the Spaniards! That's why Don Carlos was at Princeton and that's why he was on the waterfront tonight."

But, *miséricorde*, they exclaimed—what did the Spaniards want with the Dauphin? What interest could they have in him?

"A very great interest," the Duke insisted. "Spain is threatened at every turn by France. Talleyrand wants Louisiana back again. He and Bonaparte have been bullying Spain for months. Don't you see what a card the Dauphin would be in Spanish hands? A trump to play against Talleyrand's aces in the diplomatic game? Mark my words, the boy is at this moment on his way to St. Augustine in the Floridas."

"Or to the New Orleans!" Mr. de la Motte shook his head.

Yes, or to Mexico City, for that matter—to Havana, to Santo Domingo, to Spain!

"I don't mind confessing to you," the Duke remarked after a long silence, "that we are in a terrible fix!"

THE Duke and his friends had no immediate way of corroborating their suspicion. They were to wait a long time for a confirmation of their fears. But, furnished with certain documents which the passing years were to bring to light, one may anticipate their certainty.

The boy was at that moment in a coach, being conveyed as rapidly as possible to Chester where a ship was awaiting him. Roger Moore had not been mistaken when he had written that Francis Vincent would always attract attention. Ducros, Mr. de la Motte, and now the Spaniards. For it is in the Spanish archives that one finds the meager reference to these events, in the secret archives of the Council of the Indies at Madrid.

"*El Niño*," they called him. "The Boy."

If one did not possess Ducros's and Mr. de Vendome's records one would never guess the Boy's identity. They were wonderfully silent about the whole affair, the Spaniards. Spread over a period of years there are isolated mentions of the prisoner, of his presence in one or another of the Spanish possessions in America, but no details, no chronology, no itinerary of his movements capable of reconstruction. Indeed there might never have been any written evidence whatever of his captivity except for a dispute which seems immediately to have

arisen concerning the responsibility for his custody. With their own private ambitions in view, all of the high Spanish officials in the New World claimed him, each of them insisting that in his province alone could so important a personage be adequately safeguarded pending an opportunity to transfer him to Spain across an ocean rendered perilous with French and British fleets.

Both Floridas wanted him; the Viceroy of Mexico was bitter in his opposition to the Governor of Louisiana; the Cabildo at Orleans complained to the Captain General of Cuba; the Captain General spread his grievances before the Royal Audience in Santo Domingo; Santo Domingo protested to the Council of the Indies. The Council of the Indies apparently decided, finally, that the dominions on the mainland should share the honor of guarding *El Niño*, each of them receiving him in turn for stated periods. The disputes began again. The Viceroy of Mexico had kept him beyond the specified time; the Captain General of Cuba considered himself insulted; the Royal Audience in Santo Domingo was mortally offended.

So one has glimpses of the Boy—a close prisoner, *incommunicado*, but treated with very profound courtesy and respect, gliding through Florida waterways in Seminole canoes, slipping in and out of Louisiana bayous, stopping for the night, no doubt, at the great White House plantation where Marius Bringier hospitably provided cabins with beds, meals and slaves for passing travellers and no names asked, jingling along the *Camino Real* to the clatter of Mexican mules.

El Niño and his suite of grandees, Folches, Boulignys, Iturrigarays.

It was a stupid arrangement, of course. Indian paddlers nodded their feathered head-dresses; plantation slaves rolled their eyes; Mexican *hacienda* intendants winked at one another under their braided sombreros. A legend grew; a belief was given currency. Rumors of it crossed the Spanish borders. It began to be whispered in the cities of the North, where men were eagerly listening, desperately watching—Ducros, de la Motte, the Duke de la Roche.

"The Spaniards have a prisoner who travels all the time. A boy. *El Niño*, they call him."

CHAPTER VIII

PEPPER CORNS

THE boy was gone, and there was nothing to do but sit and wait. Quietly enough, after the first shock of dismay, at Greenwich, where they believed him aboard a frigate bound for the Tripoli station, a two years' absence in any case, with very little certainty of communication. There was no use making a fuss about it at the State Department.

"He'll be safe enough," Roger Moore told Jumel. "There's no trouble at present with the Barbary States. Although I'd rather see our frigates bombarding those Bashaws or whatever they call themselves than paying over this annual tribute to protect our shipping. Mr. Hamilton tells me we paid Tunis, Algiers and Tripoli over a million dollars last year."

Quietly enough, too, outwardly, but actually in the most acute apprehension at Philadelphia, where the Duke and his companions scarcely knew how to take this disaster. They wrote to Mr. de Colignac, of course, announcing to him the disappearance of the Dauphin, and received from him in due time a reply in which the old Vendée chieftain sought to conceal his anxiety by calling them all the names in the calendar. They put their ears at the crack of every door, hoping to catch some whisper of diplomatic indiscretion, some scrap of Spanish gossip, for instance, but the rumors had not yet begun to drift up from the south; Don Carlos de Yrujo was a cathedral of silence; the town—after it got through having the yellow fever again very badly—was talking of nothing but the *Constitution* and the *Constellation*, and laughing at the fiasco of the great Tub Conspiracy.

I do not know what to think, Raoul de Vendome wrote. *If it is true that the boy is with the Spaniards, it may be that they will put him back on his throne at the head of a European coalition against this abominable Bonaparte. That might be better than dragging him through the Vendée again. I have never been in favor of that at the bottom of my heart. On the other hand, if the Spaniards are simply intending to make another Man of the Iron Mask of him we must prevent that. It would be worse than the Vendée. If he is with the Spaniards!*

As for Ducros, he was completely in the dumps. To have had the boy in his hands only a few steps from the wharf, and to have had him stolen from under his nose! Whoever it was, they had gotten in by way of the shed roof. Ducros had no doubt concerning the kidnapping, for the boy could not possibly have escaped alone. He had been roped securely to the chair and they had given him something to put him to sleep. It was not a joyful thing to report—three men killed and the failure of his coup—and for once all of Ducros's glib plausibility deserted him.

I have only evils to relate to you, he recorded. *We have fallen badly in this affair of the Dauphin. Who could have foreseen that he would be made to disappear like that! I remain entirely flabbergasted and have nothing to do but twiddle my thumbs.*

Which was precisely what Paris advised him to continue doing.

While we appreciate your zeal, it appears that every time you undertake something you finish by putting your feet in the dish. In this case you seem to have played the monkey very successfully, pulling some one else's chestnuts out of the fire. As regards the package, you will refrain from doing anything whatsoever until you are specifically instructed. We are of the opinion that as long as you keep your hands off it the package will remain quite safely at Moore Mansion. Above all, no violence in Greenwich or in Philadelphia. The Americans are easily offended in such matters, especially when the participants are foreigners.

One imagines Ducros very crestfallen upon receipt of this document. At all events he covered reams of paper endeavoring to excuse himself to his chiefs. "Without importance," these letters are all marked in the police archives.

THERE was the yellow fever again in Philadelphia during that summer of 1798. A terrible time with the neglected dead lying in heaps in the streets, the city given over to robbers and ghouls, the population fled once more to the river and to Master's Place near the Mill Pond. And in spite of all the quarantine regulations the epidemic reached New York. It was "the terrible yellow fever year" which in a few pestilential weeks heard the tolling of bells for two thousand deaths.

Out at Greenwich they felt secure; there was no danger in the good, clean country air. But the village was filled with refugees come from the infected district and, with the nation at war on the sea and all shipping matters consequently of vital concern, merchants were obliged occasionally to visit their counting rooms and to frequent the Tontine Exchange. Roger Moore had ships building at Ackley's and Eckford's yards; he was a member of the board charged with the construction of the city's new fortifications. Against Abigail's advice he insisted on attending to his affairs.

"I agree with Stephen Girard," he assured her. "It's the doctors who create the epidemics. They frighten the people to death. I've seen three of them, and it's all pepper corns!"

But one evening in August he came home a very sick man. It had taken him suddenly at the Exchange. He was suffering from pains in the head and an unconquerable lassitude had possessed itself of his entire being so that it was an effort

even to fill a cup of water with which to assuage the burning thirst which assailed him. He took to his bed and they sent for a doctor.

"Don't mince words with me," Roger Moore asked him bluntly. "What ails me?"

It was the plague. The yellow fingers had at last reached out and caught him. Roger Moore sent every one out of the room except Abigail.

"Go to the library," she records that he told her. "Don't let any one see you. To the right of the mantel, on a line with it, in the center of the second panel you will find the spring to a secret closet. In it is a package done up with red seals addressed to Francis. Go and look. I don't want the package; I just want you to find the closet and make sure the package is there. Hurry!"

A few moments later Abigail returned. She had found the closet. The package was there. Francis's name on it and some writing of Axel's, and a date in 1806. She had closed the closet again. Roger Moore nodded.

"Do not tell a soul," he instructed her. "If anything happens to me you are to see that he gets the package on that date. If Francis doesn't return and you have positive proof of his death you are to send it back to Axel, but only if you have positive proof."

"And if anything happens to me?" Abigail inquired.

"Then tell Polly about it," he decided. "Some one person who can be trusted must always know. And now we'll fight this —— fever."

Thoughout the hours that followed, Abigail's composure matched his courage. Everything possible was done, without confusion or outcry. They closed all the windows; the kitchen was set to preparing clam-juice; niter and pitch were burned constantly in the sickroom. They bled him repeatedly and fired horse pistols at his bedside. Abigail persisted in doing it, although the doctor maintained that the practise was antiquated. In its place he recommended inhalations of camphor and pills compounded of white soap and aloes. The room became unbearable, suffocating, filled with the stale accumulating stench of acrid odors which no breath of air from outside was allowed to disperse. Polly was sent over to Richmond Hill to stay with Theodosia.

But it was all for nothing. On the second night Roger Moore commenced to bleed at the nose; the whites of his blood-shot eyes were showing yellow. They did not need to see the black vomit to know that the end had come.

"Yorktown!" Abigail heard him muttering.

The body began to turn purple. He died early on the morning of the fourth day.

The windows were finally opened.

1799, 1800, the boy had been gone two years. The presidential elections came; Colonel Burr carried New York for the Republicans with his Tammany "Martlings." Christmas passed; and in February, 1801, there was a great din of guns and bells, a great popular huzzaing around bonfires announcing the election of Thomas Jefferson after the long deadlock in Congress. The French war was over; the Federalists were done with; everywhere the tricolor cockades were crowding out the black. The boy had been gone nearly three years now; and there was no news.

Abigail was increasingly worried. The frigates were back. The Mediterranean squadron had been relieved. Francis, if he was alive, should have come home—should have written in any event. Not a word in three years. But it was useless to inquire there, the boy had not served under his own name. Abigail had no reason to suppose that he was anywhere except at sea. And at the State Department the new Secretary, Mr. Madison, would be entirely too busy to bother his head about a missing powder-monkey.

"It would only be pepper corns to him," Abigail was convinced. "He'll have enough to do running after Jefferson to get him to pull up his woolen stockings."

Abigail did not know where to turn. Theodosia was married and gone to Charleston with her husband; Colonel Burr was Vice President and away at Washington, the new place on the Potomac to which Government had been removed. And he was a Republican, the foremost figure in the party, the man who had organized the Republican victory and come near being elected President instead of the Mammoth. And all those in power were Republicans—new names, new faces everywhere, new ways of doing things, no decorum at the President's house, no precedence, no manners. Abigail loathed them all; she considered Thomas Jefferson a public calamity, a half baked dreamer and an atheist. Colonel Burr, Mr. Hamilton kept assuring her, was a rake, a voluptuary, a bankrupt, a creeping intriguer, a perfect Catiline.

"Colonel Burr keeps concubines," Abigail noted, after one of these conversations with the owner of the Grange, "and meets them at the Manhattan Baths. He has portraits of naked women in his picture gallery. Of course I know that Mr. Hamilton once had a mistress—he admitted it publicly—and gentlemen enjoy a certain latitude in these matters, but Colonel Burr flaunts his profligacy."

How much of all this was simply the small talk of Federalist slanders, the spray of Clinton-Livingston propaganda, Abigail had no means of knowing, nor could she foresee that a too bold assertion of some of them on Mr. Hamilton's part was before very long to take him to his death at Weehawken before Colonel Burr's pistol. But Abigail would have nothing to do with the little Colonel any more. In the same way she would have nothing to do with Jumel.

Stephen Jumel had turned Republican. The former admirer of General Washington, the recipient of how many Federalist social favors, had become a Federal rat, leaving the sinking ship.

Abigail did not care for the reason—it was all "pepper corns" again—but it had happened in 1799. After the suspension of trade between America and the French West Indian colonies at the time of the French war, Jumel had seen with delight how fatal this isolation must prove to the revolted blacks in Santo Domingo. Starvation was at hand to even up the score of the terrible massacre year. And then to his horror the American Congress passed the trade-renewing act. A Consul General was sent to Santo Domingo, and the United States signed a treaty with Toussaint, the monster—for in Jumel's eyes the great leader of the blacks was nothing else. With the aid of an American squadron Toussaint defeated his mulatto rival and made himself master of an independent Santo Domingo.

On the day this news reached him, Jumel ceased to be a Federalist. It seems that he stalked into the Coffee House, his great bulk towering above the crowd, and to the huge entertainment of the Clinton and Livingston cliques denounced the Federalist administration which had made common cause with the "gilded African," as Bonaparte called him.

"The American navy is disgraced!" he thundered. "An American consular agent has clasped a hand reeking with the blood of white women and children. An American President has covered himself with shame. May the curse of God descend on the men who have done this thing!"

It was, as Colonel Burr was reported to have remarked afterward, very nearly high treason!

This was considered bad enough at Moore Mansion, where to be born was to be a Federalist, but Jumel had then done something perhaps even worse in Abigail's virtuous eyes. A hot-headed gesture made, possibly, to spite the aristocratic Federalist circles of Whitehall and State Streets who chose to tilt up their noses at him for his desertion. Something to turn their noses up still farther, if that was what they wanted, to strike at their pride and provide a constant offense to the rigid respectability of the city's most exclusive residential quarter.

For in the year 1800 the neighborhood was scandalized to see him, without the

slightest regard for public decency, bring his mistress to his new house on Whitehall Street. Eliza Brown, formerly Betsy Bowen Delacroix. It was well known that he was keeping her and the fact did not in any way detract from his popularity at the Assemblies, but that he should do publicly what society would tolerate only in private—that was a horse of another color.

"The man is living openly in adultery!" One can almost hear Abigail's outraged dismay. "Of course no one will ever speak to him again."

And that was not all. He bought her a carriage, a splendid carriage from Abraham Quick's on Broad Street, in which he paraded her incontestable charms before the decorous brick residences of his neighbors. And this was an unpardonable insult which less fortunate matrons who were obliged to go abroad on foot or in hired coaches could not swallow. Not very many ladies enjoyed the luxury of a private carriage, but there was the Jezebel clattering forth every day over the cobblestones, filling the street with the racket of her insufferable presence. It was a dreadful state of affairs.

He buys her dresses and feathers, Abigail recorded, *and covers her with jewels; and when she isn't driving in her carriage she sits in her front window in full fig. to show herself off to the passers-by. I'm told they have terrible rows and you can hear her screaming at him like a fishwife. People still buy his wines and fluids and the gentlemen say they will not expel him from the Coffee House, but of course no one has called on them. I will not receive them if he presumes to bring her out here and I have given orders to our stable not to salute the Jumel livery when they meet.*

At all events, Abigail was not consulting Jumel about Francis, and whatever he may have thought of the boy's absence he knew better, apparently, than to approach the lady of Moore Mansion.

And throughout these years no hint from Mr. de la Motte and his friends concerning Francis's possible whereabouts seems to have reached Abigail. They kept in touch with Moore Mansion—they came frequently to call, inquiring always after the "sailor"—but they made no reference ever to the events of 1798 at Princeton and Philadelphia. They had decided, evidently, to conceal their special interest in the boy's affairs.

Mr. de Vendome enjoyed these trips to Moore Mansion, and had reason to believe that the pleasure he found in them was not entirely one-sided. Polly was fifteen in 1801, going on sixteen; she was a young lady now, slender, graceful, vivacious; pink-cheeked, with lustrous hair and flashing eyes one glance from which over a plate of rusks which she was handing to Mr. de Vendome had laid him low. And when a little later she had sung "Fair Aurora, Pray Thee Stay" for him, accompanying herself on the four-stringed guitar, the thing was done There were not enough adjectives in Raoul de Vendome's vocabulary with which to describe her. In Aunt Abigail's watchful presence they talked prudently of dogs and horses.

"The subject does not lend itself to declarations of love," Raoul complained. "If I say to her 'Mademoiselle, in France we chase the stag on horseback with dogs' it does not sound at all like 'Mademoiselle, I adore you!' And always the old one she sits there and fills my cup with tea when I forget to turn it upside down. I have swallowed gallons of Bohea, a beverage which I detest. Gallons of Bohea and pounds of rusks while we talk about those accursed horses. And the little one she looks at me with her mocking eyes as much as to say 'Catch me if you can!' and then she goes to play "Charming Gabrielle" on the Astor and Broadwood pianoforte, and I think that I shall go mad."

Finally one afternoon she contrived to get him out into the garden.

"My eye and Betty Martin!" Abigail made note of the fact that evening. "It's taken them long enough in all conscience! I thought that I should never be done with this tea drinking. Young

people are very slow-pokey these days it seems to me. We managed things better at Annapolis in my day."

Out in the garden they did not talk of dogs and horses. There was nothing slow-pokey about it.

"Mademoiselle," Raoul told her. "I love you very much."

"Monsieur, what you say destroys me with astonishment!" Polly assured him solemnly, her great mocking eyes dancing.

"And does it displease you as much as it astonishes you?" he asked her.

"When I recover from my astonishment I shall better be able to judge of my displeasure," she countered. "Of course, you are extremely bold to say such things."

"Of course," he admitted. "I can never forgive myself."

"And I shall have to return to my aunt at once.'

"Naturally. You would not wish to listen to anything else I might have to say."

"Then you may offer me your arm, Monsieur."

"At your service, Mademoiselle."

And she let him conduct her to Aunt Abigail, by way of the orchard.

Under the third apple tree to the left he kissed her.

1801, 1802, and no sign of Francis. Another squadron left for Tripoli. From Europe came the news that Spain had signed a treaty with Napoleon giving Louisiana back to France—Louisiana and Orleans, the mouth of the Mississippi. To have the Spaniards there was bad enough but Napoleon was a menace of another order. The man was making himself master of Europe. After Louisiana it would be Canada. It might be well, many people were beginning to say, to make an effort to purchase the island of Orleans from the French and safeguard the free navigation of the river. There was quite a city down there, "the New Orleans," the French called it—"Orleens" in American. Quite an immoral town, like Paris, filled with foreigners and all sorts of goings on.

Abigail was not greatly concerned. "Orleens" was very far away—Madame de Lassy and the d'Aurelles were there now—and there were plenty of goings on in Washington, not to mention Whitehall Street, Louisiana was a vague wilderness filled with swamps, in the bay of Barataria there were pirates. The commercial troubles of the Mississippi Valley left her quite unmoved. That whole territory would do well to leave the Union, the country was getting to be too big as it was. Too big and too Republican. Even in New England they were talking of seceding. Let Thomas Jefferson and the Virginians go their way, let there be a confederation of northern states bounded by the Hudson, where decent people—meaning Federalists—could live in peace. As for foreign affairs, Abigail only knew this, that anything the Republican administration undertook to do would be wrong.

"Heavenly powers!" she exclaimed, "what do you expect? Look at them! Thomas Jefferson, a poltroon in politics, a man who invents whirligig chairs, Jemmy Madison who wouldn't be anybody at all now if it weren't for his wife, Gallatin, a Geneva Jew who never was anybody; Burr, Monroe—why Elizabeth Kortright ever married him I never did understand! What a crew!"

But this business of Francis's disappearance was serious. There was no positive proof, but Abigail began to make up her mind to it that he was dead. Axel de Fersen must be told. She wrote to him in the summer of 1802—she had already announced Roger Moore's death to him—and explained her fears. Four years and no word from the boy. He had probably been killed. The package was still there and might as well remain at Moore Mansion for the time being. Mr. de Fersen wrote back and agreed with her. There was nothing to be done and Abigail must not worry.

Raoul de Vendome was paying court to Polly—and none too successfully these days after the orchard episode—at every opportunity, spending a great deal of his

time in the New York coach, to the vast annoyance of Ducros to whom these constant journeys back and forth gave the everlasting fidgets.

"What does he do? What is taking place?" he kept asking Paris. "You do not permit me to go anywhere near Moore Mansion; *sapristi*, how am I to know what is happening? One of these four mornings he will come back with the package and then no doubt you will start giving the high cries!"

Paris took no notice; the secret police was too busy at home ferreting out royalist plots against the First Consul's life.

But Mr. de Vendome's three "old ones" had other things in mind now. The rumors had been coming up from the south, filtering up through Natchez, and Nashville, and Louisville, through Savannah and Charleston, from one river landing stage to another, from one trading post to the next, from port to port along the coast.

"The Spaniards have a prisoner who travels all the time. A boy—*El Niño* they call him."

The thing drifted around the waterfronts of Mississippi Valley towns, where everything Spanish was hostile and absorbing, up and down the wharves of southern seaports, where all the gossip of the turbulent world was news. It stayed for months in waterside taverns until here and there a man carried it inland; it travelled then along the wilderness trails, through the slow traffic of canals, in the saddle bags of dispatch riders, picked up at crossroad post houses. In time it came jingling into Washington and Baltimore, floating up to Philadelphia and New York. It suddenly crossed the seas and was heard in Martinique and St. Kitts, went ashore at Brest and Dover, and was taken up to Paris and London.

"The Spaniards have a prisoner who travels all the time. A boy—*El Niño* they call him. *Les Espagnols gardent un prisonier qu'ils font voyager tout le temps—un garçon qu'ils appellent El Niño.*"

London listened and wondered. Paris pricked up its ears and took down Ducros' reports. Embassy couriers and king's messengers went rolling across Europe. At Madrid, in the chancellery of the Council of the Indies, the Prince Godoy frowned very hard and issued various instructions to the Captain General of Cuba. The story came back across the Atlantic straight into the private offices of counting-rooms. The Barings wrote to John Jacob Astor about it; Nathan Rothschild notified Stephen Girard. Not long afterward it was being whispered in coffee houses. Gentlemen went home and told their wives. It became immediately the small talk of banquets, along with the grimcracks. That was in the summer of 1802. Mr. de la Motte heard it in Washington at a private dinner at the Portuguese Minister's and went home to Philadelphia in a great state to tell the others.

Ducros had already heard it some time before at a less private dinner in the forecastle of Stephen Girard's ship the *Good Friends*.

"I have discovered where he is, our boy," he reported in voluble glee. "There is no doubt that he is this *Niño* those sacred pigs of Spaniards have got."

Paris informed him that his discovery was several months old, reminded him that the Spanish dominions were fairly extensive and advised him that a special agent would shortly be sent to America to investigate the affair. A certain Number Seventeen, from the American Section.

"Is it to bolster up their colonial empire that the Spaniards parade the Son of France through their provinces?" the Duke exclaimed when he was informed. "Louisiana is soon to be French again, in Mexico they are conspiring against the Viceroy, it would not take more than a dropped hat to send the Kentuckians storming into Florida. We must get the Dauphin out of there."

"Precisely," Mr. de Croisic agreed with him. "I do not doubt that he is *El Niño*. But where is he?"

"They keep him traveling," Mr. de la

Motte explained again. "Florida, Louisiana, Mexico. Sooner or later he passes through all three. The place to watch for him, in my opinion, is at the New Orleans. One of us must go down there at once."

The three "old ones" turned and looked at Raoul de Vendome.

I knew it! he wrote afterward. *They were bound to pick on me, just when I have so much to do in New York. If I go away now Polly will forget me entirely. He is an infernal nuisance, this Dauphin of ours!*

But an attempt must be made to get him away from the Spaniards. The King of France must not serve as a public exhibit. Nor must he be beholden to the Prince Godoy of Spain for his crown, if it came to that. The way to the throne lay through the Vendée after all. Against all his personal inclinations, Raoul was forced to admit it. He would have to go to New Orleans.

"You will need to be very cautious," the Duke warned him. "The Spaniards have a habit of executing people with their morning coffee. And the majority of the Creoles are strongly Jacobin in their sympathies. Under Governor Carondelet they were singing the "Marseillaise" every night in the streets. Still, you will find a firmly royalist group, especially among the refugee families from Santo Domingo."

"Be careful of young Bernard Marigny," Mr. de la Motte reminded Raoul. "His father, Philippe de Marigny, was one of us, but the son is very republican I am told. They've sent him to England to sow his wild oats, but if he returns you will scarcely be able to avoid coming in contact with him. He is enormously wealthy and owns almost the whole of the Faubourg Marigny. The Pontalbas are in Europe, Andres Almonaster is dead—you'll have no trouble from that quarter. Very Spanish of course."

"Salcedo, the Governor, is in his dotage," the Duke added. "Francisco Bouligny is the man to look out for there, Colonel of the Regiment of Louisiana, but I understand he is in very poor health. Well, there you are, Raoul. There isn't much that we can tell you. You'll have to be guided by circumstances. Try and locate the Dauphin and ascertain his itinerary. After that we'll see."

The prospect was not brilliant.

"If anything should happen to me," Raoul asked them, "I should like you to tell Miss Moore at Greenwich—Miss Abigail Moore."

"Oh yes, certainly, Miss Abigail Moore," the Duke smiled. "I understand perfectly. We will see to it that she does not forget you, Miss Abigail Moore. We will tell her that you have gone on a dangerous mission to Louisiana, and that you are surrounded by Creole belles. That will make a great impression."

"No doubt." Raoul tried not to show his annoyance. "You will ruin me completely with your Creole belles!"

"Courage, my child!" the Duke laughed at him. "Rest assured that they will think of you every day at Greenwich. A little separation is a splendid thing for lovers."

Raoul was not sure of it at all. He sat up half the night writing to Polly, excusing himself for not having been able to come to say good-by, discovering fifty ways of telling her that he loved her more than life, adding postcripts begging her to think of him a little. A "triple" letter on three huge sheets, postage thirty cents. A superb extravagance which probably afforded great entertainment to the post rider who undoubtedly read it before delivering it. The next day Raoul went rolling out of Philadelphia, bound south.

Ducros watched him go, and ordered a horse.

CHAPTER IX

EL NIÑO

YOU will see to it thatt he itineraries of El Niño are canceled, the Prince Godoy had written to the Captain General of Cuba. *Upon his next arrival at Orleans*

you will issue orders detaining him permanently in that place. The Royal Commissioner whom you will send to Orleans for the ceremony of transfer of the province to France will take El Niño in his custody and bring him to Havana when he returns. You will forward all complaints from the Viceroy of Mexico and from the Governors of Florida direct to the Council of the Indies.

One gets the impression that *El Niño* was perhaps become a good deal of a white elephant to the Spaniards. It had been a great stroke on the part of Don Carlos de Yrujo, and they had made him Marquis de Casa Yrujo for it—and his Philadelphia wife, Sally McKean, a marquise, which was a good joke on the fearfully Republican McKeans—but now that they had the boy they did not seem to know what to do with him. Spain was in no position to force European coalitions on Napoleon. It was only by filling Lucien Bonaparte's pockets with diamonds that the Prince Godoy had recently been able to prevent Napoleon from forcing himself on Spain. There was no question, for the time being, of putting *El Niño* back on his throne. The only question at Madrid was how to maintain Don Carlos IV on his own.

Still, they could not let the boy go. They had him and they must keep him. The day might come when they could use him. Offer him to Talleyrand perhaps in exchange for a new lease of security from the Napoleonic menace. Trade him with Austria, barter him with England in return for troops or ships or money. The boy was worth his weight in gold at the right moment. Until then let him stay at Orleans or in the Morro at Havana.

Perhaps he would stay there forever until he died. What did it matter? One boy more or less. He was nothing, of no importance personally, just a card in the Spanish deck, one of the Jacks. *El Niño.*

RAOUL DE VENDOME settled back wearily in his pirogue for the passage up the canal from Bayou St. Jean. It was early in the year 1803, for at the last moment it had been decided that he was to go by way of the Floridas in order to sniff the air of St. Augustine and Pensacola. But not a breath had been stirring there—the boy was actually in Mexico at the time—and Raoul was only too glad to see the end of his long pilgrimage. Spanish dagger and banana, palmetto and hanging moss, cottonwood and cypress. Swamps, swamps, swamps. How it depressed him, all this raw, watery muck after the firm, dry self-respecting earth and the grass of the north. The clean green fields of Greenwich, and the pleasant dust of the Monument Lane. Ices at Brannan's, and Polly—Polly.

Before him Raoul could see the line of Carondelet's recent wooden palisades behind their ditch, the little humps of forts, St. Joseph, St. Ferdinand, Bourgogne. Within that inclosure he knew was the old town, the old French city over which the flag of Spain had waved for forty years, ever since a French king had let it go, not caring. They had rebelled, those French Louisianans who still cared, driving out their Spanish governor, protesting that the King of France must not abandon them. Instead O'Reilly came, O'Reilly the Bloody from Spain, and the patriot leaders were shot. Nearly forty years ago. And now, if it was true what they were saying, the New Orleans was going back to a new France, and the King of France was a prisoner passing through this ancient French province which had abandoned him.

"I gazed with an indescribable melancholy," Raoul wrote, "upon the roofs and belfries of this town in which I know not what awaits me. A feeling of dread came over me as I approached the city of the Spaniards. On a battlefield, at that moment, I know that I should have run away. But the pirogue went gliding on."

The *Vieux Carré,* palisades and river. Quebec in the north, Orleans in the south. French courage, French toil, French hearts. French bones in the earth that had once been France, sleeping now under alien flags. *Le Canada, La Louisiane.* Raoul had heard his father, his uncles

speak of them. The names came to him out of the past. A scrap of song ran through his head, something about a *voyageur*. That was Canada. And suddenly another, vividly remembered after long years:

Toi conné qui belle rigole
Qui coulé dans bananiers,
Ou toi té sé fé la folle
La foi qui toi té baigné.

That was Louisiana—his negro paddlers were talking the same "gombo" patois that, curiously, was something from his childhood.

It was late on a Sunday afternoon and the chilly wind brought with it a booming of drums; a continuous tattoo, persistently rhythmic and ominous. So, at a distance, it seemed, until it turned out to be only the jovial dancing of negroes in Congo Square. An open space under sycamores at the gates of Fort St. Ferdinand —drums and bones, deal tables under gay cotton awnings, heaped with *pain patate* and "mulatto's stomach" ginger cake, and a swirling holiday crowd of slaves in brilliant flowered calicoes and red *tignons*, screaching around the dancers—

"*Dansez, dansez, badoum!*"

Shiny black faces split with laughter across gleaming teeth; rolling eyes showing the whites so strongly against the contrasting ebony; fat, ample-breasted *gardiennes* in colored fichu scarves shaking gold hook ear-rings; tall *vendeuses*, powerful girls with the steady tread, the careful poise of head learned from heavy market baskets; grinning *cocodri* boys in long, hooded, blanket *capottes;* soft Congo and Santo Domingo voices raised in screaming merriment, in unctuous delight bubbling with song. Couples turning, turning, forever turning in the dance—the *carabiné*, the *bamboula*.

"*Badoum! Badoum!*"

Always the throbbing drums, gripping the throat, quickening the blood. Innocent drums of the holiday *bamboula* until one remembered the massacre drums of Santo Domingo, the sinister, midnight drums of *Voudou*. Raoul did not like the drums. But the scene was bright and friendly; gentlemen from the city with their bareheaded ladies were strolling along the rampart smiling at all this commotion in the square; already, with the declining sun, family groups of slaves were gathering in their small fry, ambling off toward the center of the town, singing the homeward bound refrain—

"*Bonsoir, dansé, soleil couché*. The sun has set, we've danced, good night!"

In all this strangeness a great simplicity, a sense of long accustomed habit which pleased Raoul. It must be an agreeable place, this Orleans.

But the lower streets were frightful; morasses of mud, lakes of water overflowing on to the sidewalk *banquettes*. And no names at the street corners. Raoul floundered from islet to islet, down street and up alley, following the plank borders of the *banquettes;* forced into detours to avoid impassable thoroughfares; asking his way of natives who confessed to an ignorance of street names as great as his own—since they were known chiefly by the name of some prominent resident and not according to any official system of nomenclature—until at last he found a Spanish policeman *sereno* who was able to direct him to the boarding-house he was looking for on Toulouse Street.

A lime-washed stucco façade, green jalousies, iron balconies on the street, small-paned windows with fanlights, a vaulted inner court showing latticed galleries and a garden beyond. One flight up, a cheerful room overlooking sour orange trees. It was quiet and it seemed very clean—a big four-poster bed, spotless linen, the floor scrubbed with brick-dust. Forty-five dollars a month, for the town was packed and the rates high for garnished rooms. But everything of the best, handsome, well-dressed Madame Pauline assured him. She was a quadroon, Raoul knew, although he would never have guessed it. He was too tired to argue with her; besides, he liked the house.

They brought him water in a tub, and a good supper—quantities of meat cooked

with rice and grease, *jambalaya*, excellent, and brandied fruit, and a tiny glass of *anisette*. In the morning, he was told, there would be *café au lait* in bed, a French breakfast. If he wanted anything he must call.

He called at nine o'clock because he had heard a cannon fired. What was that?

"For the slaves," Madame Pauline explained. "The evening gun from the Place d'Armes. After gunfire no negroes are allowed on the streets except *cocodri* boys carrying the *fanal*—the lantern—for their mistress when she returns from the ball."

"Does that mean that you can't go out now?" he asked with blundering curiosity.

"*Pardon*, monsieur, I am a free woman of color, not a *brute*," she reminded him.

Raoul understood that he had committed an enormous stupidity. He sat up for a while putting it all down in a letter to Polly, writing up his own diary. So much that was strange, so much that was already so agreeable. So much that might happen in this curious ancient city. Just as he was climbing into the four-poster a Spanish voice under his window droned out the news that it was eleven o'clock and a cloudy night. The *sereno* with his rattle.

Raoul went off to sleep and to dream. The New Orleans—drums, *bamboulas*, evening guns, *jambalaya*, sour orange trees, *cocodri* boys, fanlights, balconies, *serenos*, rattles. Eleven o'clock and a cloudy night. *El Niño*.

FOR weeks Raoul kept himself quietly at Madame Pauline's. It was better, he thought, to remain unknown, impersonal as much as possible, independent of social groups and hospitalities, free to wander about the streets and learn his way around, to sniff the air of the town and get his bearings. The Place d'Armes and the *cabildo*, the arsenal and the *calaboza*, the Government House and the *comandancia*, the barracks and the Ursuline convent. Chartres Street, Royal and Bourbon, Dumaine, St. Anne, Orleans leading to the rear of the Cathedral, St. Pierre, Toulouse, St. Louis, the levee along the river front, bordered with trees, busy with commerce and shipping. On all sides stucco and brick, fanlights and galleries, arcades and *portes-cochéres*, high picket fences with orange trees showing above, a never-failing delight of hand-wrought iron in graceful traceries, railings, lattices, gratings, so delicate and so secure. A loveliness of prison bars to guard *El Niño*.

Raoul found a café, the Suckling Calf, across from the side of the *cabildo* on St. Pierre Street, a quiet table where he sipped his Santo Domingo *gouave*, watched the town go by and listened to the talk. Trade and plantation matters in the morning, while the *vendeuses* from the market sang their wares.

"*Confiture coco — belles des figues— pralines, pacanes!* Jam, figs, bonbons, pecans!"

"Barataria! Barataria!" People always smiled at the cry, glanced more eagerly at the goods. Seafaring men, sly of eye and nimble; bearded, ear-ringed rogues grinning at the *sereno;* smugglers—pirates some of them—from Barataria Bay. A gentry, Raoul took pains to learn, who passed unmolested in and out of Pierre and Jean Lafitte's blacksmith shop on St. Philippe Street. And one always winked when one spoke of that blacksmith shop.

In the evening, gossip and politics. The latest duel—on the levee, or on the *banquette* right under the *fanal* of the Orleans ballroom between two waltzes; the latest love affair; the latest *bon mot* of Madame de Macarty; the latest extravagance of Bernard Marigny, home again from London; the latest death notice posted up on the trees. The latest rumors—that the new French Colonial Prefect had sailed; that the Mother Superior of the Ursulines was intending to take her nuns to Havana rather than risk the impieties of the French republican régime; that the "Anglo-Saxons" were furious on account of the cession of

Louisiana by Spain; that the Kentuckians were about to attack West Florida. Terrible fellows, tobacco-chewing, *wiski*-drinking barbarians, those *Américains*. Heaven save Louisiana from their clutches; there were too many of them in Orleans already, Americans and Englishmen. No manners, no breeding, no tact.

"*Canaille!*"

All sorts of rumors. A great hostility between the Creoles and the Anglo-Saxons; an aloofness between the French and Spanish elements; a gulf between them both and the American intruders, the commerical opportunists who were edging into Orleans. A whisper or two concerning a Mexican Association among these foreigners for the liberation of Mexico. But never a word about *El Niño*.

AND on March 26th there was a great banging of guns from Fort St. Charles, a long convoy of barges around the bend, a procession of clergy and high officials from the landing stage to the Government House. Proclamation and addresses, in which the King of Spain was not by any means forgotten in the general French excitement. Mr. de Laussat, the Colonial Prefect, had arrived from France.

Raoul saw them land, saw them drive off with young Bernard Marigny to the Marigny mansion—a great brick-and-timber plantation building on the levee, twice the size of an ordinary residence—which was to house them all: Mr. de Laussat and his really lovely wife, their two young daughters, several officers and secretaries. And there was a personal aide, a most engaging young man in his very early twenties, perhaps less; extremely distinguished, not too tall but gracefully built, with a fine pair of blue eyes above a blarneying smile and a touch of arrogance to the chin, dressed up to the last European stitch—a long-sleeved, snuff-colored coat with pointed tails and brass buttons, a triple cravat and a high red collar, top boots with tassels, and so tightly fitting pantaloons that one wondered how he contrived to sit down in them.

By nightfall all the young ladies on the balconies and all the matrons knew his name. Even Madame Pauline knew his name. Louis de Valmy.

In a few hours, Raoul wrote, *he has made a sensation, this Mr. de Valmy. He will only have to push an American off the sidewalk and he will be the lion of Orleans. They say he has been dispatch rider to Bonaparte, and that he plays divinely on the drum—of all instruments! A personage, evidently. He and Bernard Marigny should make a lively pair.*

A personage—this drummer boy, dispatch rider, personal aide, secret police agent. Number Seventeen. A very angry personage, too, that evening, reporting his presence at Orleans to Citizen Fouché in Paris.

That pig of a Ducros is not here, he complained. *Before I sailed I was given to understand that he had been ordered to meet me here. I shall have my hands full alone, trying to find El Niño and running errands for Madame de Laussat. A charming woman, but she takes me for a page. If you know where Ducros is, send word to him to stir his carcass. I am also writing to Philadelphia, to Ducros, and to Mr. Girard about the ship. If we find the boy, it will be quite feasible to keep him for a while at the Balise with one of the pilots, or at Barataria.*

Mr. de Valmy had obviously been doing other things besides play divinely on the drum since his arrival at the Passes of the Mississippi.

TWO weeks later, on April 10, more guns and processions for the Marquis de Casa Calvo de la Puerta y O'Farrill, Royal Commissioner from Havana. No stranger to Orleans, since he had served there as governor after Gayoso de Lemos. A stiff, energetic gentleman who had not endeared himself to the Creoles; a punctilious grandee who loathed the French and proceeded to give the most fantastic fêtes in their honor. Fêtes which had to be returned.

It is a sort of contest, Raoul noted, *between Casa Calvo and de Laussat, in which with Marigny to help him the Frenchman is holding his own. When it is not doves flying around Madame de Laussat with rhymed compliments in their beaks, it is Temples of Good Faith and allegorical statues, banquets for eighty people at which the dessert is served at a different table in another room, and balls for two hundred couples.*

What Bernard Marigny, with inherited conceptions of hospitality, called "pretty entertainments." And two hundred *cocodri* boys carrying lanterns afterward through the streets, frightening the "devil's horse" crayfish back into their mud holes; two hundred maids following behind with their ladies' slippers; two hundred belles in white silk and jewels in their hair wondering if their beaux were fighting duels anywhere. Probably not—gone to a quadroon ball more likely, or gambling at *bourre.*

May, June, July, while Mr. de Laussat waited for final authority. And the Spaniards worked behind his back, and did their best to persuade people to leave the Colony, and marched ostentatiously with the *fanals* of the tearful cortege which, one Sunday night after gun-fire, escorted the Mother Superior of the Ursulines and sixteen of her nuns to the vessel which was to take them to Havana. Only nine of them stayed to brave the republican uncertainty. A mortifying moment for Mr. de Laussat which amused Raoul enormously. And the Anglo-Saxons were going around with their noses in the air, ridiculing this transfer to France, asserting that before very long "Orleens" would be American. President Jefferson had sent Mr. Monroe to France, and he was going to buy the Island.

"Calumny!" Mr. de Laussat insisted. Napoleon would never sell Orleans or any part of Louisiana.

"Kentucky bluster!" Governor Salcedo maintained. Under the treaty, Louisiana could never be alienated by France or it reverted to Spain.

"*Sacré rouchi!*" the blacks exclaimed, grumbling at the '*Méricains.*

"Holy angels help us up!" the Creoles prayed. Heaven save them from such a fate. France would never betray them a second time!

And in the last days of July there was a ship from Bordeaux, and it was so. Napoleon had sold Orleans to America, and not only Orleans but the whole of Louisiana. The Spaniards went black with rage. The Americans were furious. The Island, yes—but all of Louisiana! Jefferson must be crazy. Nothing in it but swamps and wild beasts and gigantic Indians and mountains of salt. Millions of dollars for a wilderness.

In the *Vieux Carré* there was only a whispering silence. White faces at the gratings staring at the past. Old people wept. The crier went around with his drum to cancel the ball at the Salle d'Orleans. The *cocodri* boys put out their lanterns. At the café men sat motionless, glaring at their *gouaves* and *anisettes,* and then suddenly burst into cataracts of flaming blasphemy. Like the river pouring through a crevasse.

"The Americans! The —— Americans! *Charognes! Vaches!* Two-humped camels!"

The *serenos* were sent out to patrol the American residences, Daniel Clark's, Consul Jones's. Raoul went back to Madame Pauline's through grief-stricken, shuddering streets.

I don't know what is to happen, he wrote to Mr. de la Motte. *The American transfer is to take place as soon as possible after the French, they say. I wonder now if the Spaniards will bring El Niño to Orleans at all. I have accomplished nothing and am at my wits' ends.*

Late that night there was a clattering of cavalry, the roll of wheels through the Tchoupitoulas Gate and along the streets. Afterward a hasty commotion of voices and lanterns at the entrance to the arsenal. The matter was recorded by the High Sheriff of the Cabildo.

El Niño had arrived at Orleans.

"STAY at Orleans," Mr. de la Motte wrote back to Raoul. Stay until the French transfer in any case, and trust that something would turn up. With all the officials gathered in the city, there was no better place in all the Spanish provinces to pick up news. Come back from Orleans, Polly wrote to him in the same batch of letters—one of her rare communications—come back, unless indeed he found it impossible to tear himself away from the Creole ladies.

The Duke has been talking to her, Raoul growled in his journal, *telling her idiocies about me. Still, it has made her jealous. I suppose I'm expected to console myself with that for this accursed absence.*

He would go back if he could, he replied. The Creole ladies had nothing to do with it. He had not met any of them. None of them could hold a candle to a certain young lady at Greenwich, and this separation was driving him mad. But he had a duty to perform and until his task was accomplished he must remain in exile. Only the hope of a speedy return kept him alive. Death could not be worse than his present misery. He was sending her a box of *pralines*.

It was already early October, so long did it take for a single exchange of letters. Every one was marking time, waiting for the French troops and the ceremony of transfer now become so tragically meaningless. The town was filling up with Americans, walking about with the swaggering tread of proprietors, organizing a militia company of their own in case the Spaniards should attempt some treachery. The older Creoles were in despair. Some of the young generation inclined to take things more calmly. Bernard Marigny and Dominique Bouligny—the son of the late Colonel of the Regiment of Louisiana—had announced that they would take service under the American flag.

"All very interesting," Raoul exclaimed impatiently. "But it doesn't help me to find *El Niño*."

So it seemed, too, to Mr. de Valmy. When you got them drunk the Spaniards would not talk, a surly crowd. Ducros had not appeared. Madame de Laussat was becoming more and more exacting. The situation was a hopeless one.

And then one evening in mid-October Raoul saw Ducros—the fever inspector, the man of the Red Bonnet. It was after gun-fire on the levee; Raoul had been airing his perplexities and private sorrows along the river front; a boat at the landing stage drew his attention, a ferry from the other side; the man getting out under the lantern was the pockmarked individual of Philadelphia.

"The residence of the French Colonial Prefect," he was asking. "Where do I find it?"

They told him, the Marigny mansion beyond the fort. There was an avenue of trees leading from the levee to the portal, he could not miss it. But it was very late to go disturbing the Prefect.

"For me it is never late," the man assured them. "He will get out of bed if necessary to see me. You do not understand, but I am the bearer of important dispatches from Mexico. *Sapristi*, what I have to tell him is most important. He will probably send a special courier to Martinique with my dispatches."

Was that so? *Ma foi!* The boatmen were impressed. It must be something very special.

"If it is something very special!" the passenger laughed. "*Sapristi*, if you only knew. I could tell you something to open your eyes. Something very secret about the Spaniards, yes, but I know all about it. Right here in Orleans, under your noses. So you see!"

The fatuous Ducros! Always patting himself on the back, blowing his tin trumpets in everybody's ear. Raoul was hugging himself. Dispatches from Mexico, this man who had tried to kidnap the Dauphin, something secret about the Spaniards right here in Orleans—it was news at last of *El Niño*. Raoul was sure of it. *El Niño* was in Orleans, and this man knew something. He had it written down in those dispatches for Martinique

that he was so anxious to deliver to the Prefect.

"Well, they must never be delivered, I made up my mind to that," Raoul decided.

The man stepped onto the levee, went off toward the fort. From the shadow of the sycamores Raoul watched him, heard his footsteps echoing under the arcades of the new butcher stalls. Swiftly, from tree to tree, from pillar to pillar, Raoul began to follow.

The man was walking right along, his hands in his pockets, whistling. They passed the fort and followed the sweep of the levee. Raoul pulled his hat down over his eyes, sank his chin and mouth into his cravat, ventured a little nearer. If the man noticed him it would be very chancy. He was going to be obliged to kill him, Raoul realized that. And that was not so easy to do. At the Red Bonnet that night he had cracked two or three heads without compunction, but to sneak up behind a man, a whistling man with his hands in his pockets—Raoul knew just where he would have to do it—in the avenue of trees as soon as they had turned in at the gate. It would be quite dark there, soundless underfoot. Not too close to the house. Go for the man's throat and use your knees in the stomach near the groin. Difficult from behind.

There was the palisade. Raoul flattened himself for a moment against it. The man glanced around, recognized his avenue of trees, went in at the gate. Raoul ran to the opening, hesitated an instant, followed him in. There were lights at the mansion, violins, an entertainment in progress. All the better. A few steps now—the man was just in front, Raoul gathered himself together—and the sudden rolling of a drum from the house nearly knocked him off his feet.

"De Valmy and his drum!" Raoul realized what it was almost immediately. "Like the signal for an execution!"

The man had been startled, too! He stood for a second in his tracks, and Raoul hurled himself at him sidewise. Ducros's yell would have aroused the whole establishment, but the drum drowned it out, that devil's tattoo of the French drummer-boys' charge. Roll upon roll—the Army of the North, the Army of the Rhine, the Army of Egypt—how that de Valmy thundered them out with iron wrists, while Raoul clutched at the man's windpipe with fingers of steel, driving in his thumbs, ramming his knees into the fellow's guts, almost crying with pain himself from a terrific crack on the shin. Abruptly the drumming stopped, people cheered and clapped, Raoul felt his man go limp.

"God forgive me," he murmured.

The pockets were full of papers; Raoul stuffed them into his own. There was nothing in the hat, nothing in the lining of the coat; the shoes—Raoul had better take the shoes with him, in case anything was hidden in the soles. Pah! The man's feet stank. As for the body—Raoul limped to the gate and looked out. Not a soul. He dragged the corpse down to the opening in the palisade. Nothing stirred. Across the levee with it—great gods, the man was heavy—a grunting heave on to the edge, and over into the river.

"*Miséricorde*, what a splash! I thought the whole Faubourg Marigny would hear it."

Farewell, Ducros. Under the *fanal* of the fort Raoul took a look hastily at some of the papers. The first name he saw was *El Niño*.

CHAPTER X

WHITE COCKADES

THERE was nothing in the soles of the shoes but there had been plenty in the pockets, Raoul advised Mr. de la Motte. This Ducros had not done a bad job at all. It was all written out in the grand report which was to have gone to France by way of Martinique and justified Ducros in the eyes of his skeptical chiefs. A labor of pride.

Greetings and fraternity. Perhaps you will not take me for quite such a clam now—

After trailing Vendome to Orleans—Raoul was interested to learn—Ducros had left him, shipping as a Basque on a Spanish vessel to Vera Cruz in order to follow up a Mexican clue that he had unearthed. And in Mexico quite a lot had happened, the long and the short of which was that he had reached Mexico City, bribed his way into the most unlikely places, blarneyed his way into others, gotten himself several times in and out of jail—that was why he was so late arriving at Orleans—ferreted out the fact of *El Niño's* presence and forthcoming departure from one of the Viceroy's Indian concubines, and wormed out of a jealous official at the Presidio del Norte, who had it straight from Havana, the whole scheme of the boy's transfer to Cuba. For they were extremely disgruntled in Mexico, vindictive against the Council of the Indies, anxious to see some misfortune befall the Captain General and the authorities of Louisiana. What lies Ducros was telling them all this time the Lord only knows.

El Niño is here at Orleans in the arsenal on St. Anthony's Alley, Raoul explained to Mr. de la Motte. *He must have arrived quite some time ago. He is to be taken aboard a vessel for Havana on the day of the transfer to France. At the moment of the ceremony, when every one will be at the cabildo, they are to drive him to the levee, put him in a boat with as little fuss as possible, and row him out to the ship which will sail immediately. And what do you imagine I can do, except take off my hat as he goes by!*

There it was. The ship was undoubtedly the Marquis de Casa Calvo's, anchored in the stream. From the arsenal to the levee would require perhaps ten minutes at a smart pace; say twenty at the most. During that drive of a few islets—for there was no question of attempting any escape from the arsenal itself, the place was a perfect fortress—any rescue which Raoul might devise must be effected. From a probably well guarded carriage—the town would be full of troops on that day, and a coach under escort no great novelty—driven at noon through holiday streets, except that every one who could crowd into it would be in the Place d'Armes with his back turned to the levee. The thing was impossible.

And yet I must try, Raoul wrote. *I must try, even if I am to end up in the dungeons of the calaboza and never see Greenwich again.*

But he was in great danger of ending up in a worse place even than the *calaboza.*

For if Mr. de Valmy had not seen Ducros, he had at least seen one of Ducros's more recent reports. It had just reached him, forwarded from Paris.

The young Vendome is at Orleans, they told him, *or was when Ducros last wrote. He was staying at a boarding house on Toulouse Street kept by a quadroon woman called Pauline. Without doubt his presence in the city has something to do with* El Niño, *and you will be well advised to put yourself in touch with him, using the royalist papers with which you are provided.*

And so a few mornings later Raoul was still in bed when there was a knock at his door. And the smiling gentleman in the blue coat at the threshold was the engaging Mr. de Valmy.

"A thousand pardons for disturbing you so early," he apologized. "Have I the honor of addressing Mr. de Vendome?"

"Yes, come in and shut the door. Pray excuse the informality of this reception."

"Certainly. My name is Louis de Valmy, and I have the honor to be a police agent in the service of General Bonaparte, First Consul."

Raoul leaned back and roared with laughter. It struck him as the funniest statement that he had ever heard. As if a police agent would announce himself like that!

"Forgive me!" he gasped, "but you are too amusing, monsieur. A police agent!"

"But it is absolutely true," Mr. de Valmy insisted. "I am an agent of the

secret police, and here are my credentials."

Raoul took the paper from him and glanced at it. All in order, apparently, signed and sealed. And still Raoul laughed. The document was a forgery, of course.

"Your pleasantry is excellent," he remarked. "Your credentials are a work of art. Now you really must explain the joke, monsieur. Obviously Napoleon's police agents do not go around wearing signs in their hats, as it were!"

Mr. de Valmy produced his own hat from behind his back, and there was a white cockade on it.

"And yet," he smiled, "here is a police agent of Napoleon's who *does* wear a sign in his hat!"

Raoul stopped laughing and sat up in bed. For a moment they eyed each other —the blue-coated one always smiling, composed, Raoul a little startled, on his guard. Then, together, they bowed profoundly.

It was all perfectly simple—a brazen piece of hardihood on Mr. de Valmy's part, reported by him with great gusto, an unexpectedly helpful circumstance hailed by Raoul with delighted gratitude. Just at a time when he most needed assistance and encouragement. The thing took him at exactly the right moment, betraying his caution.

Mr. de Valmy, it seemed, was actually a police agent. The document was not a forgery but a proper credential furnished him in prosecution of a mission in America for which his post at Mr. de Laussat's side was only a blind. But the joke was on the secret police, for Mr. de Valmy was really a royalist agent.

"Here are my genuine credentials," he informed Raoul, and handed him another letter.

A letter addressed to the Duke de la Roche at Philadelphia, dated and signed by the great Duke de Savenay himself a short while before his death, recommending Mr. de Valmy—the worthy son of an excellent family in Normandy, loyal victims of the Terror—to the friendship and confidence of the royalist group in America. Raoul handled it reverently, this stained and creased scrap of treachery. As clever a bit of forgery as had ever been concocted in the bureaus of the secret police.

"It is quite true what you have probably heard," Mr. de Valmy explained. "I was a fugitive, I became a drummer boy, I served in Bonaparte's armies, I was finally transferred to the secret police. But all the time I was waiting for my chance. I managed at last to see Mr. de Savenay, thinking that I might make myself useful to you here in America. Of course I had read all the reports concerning the Dauphin in the police archives!"

"But this other mission you speak of?" Raoul asked him. "Your police mission?"

"I think perhaps it is the same as yours, Monsieur," Mr. de Valmy smiled.

"As mine?"

"Why, yes. Are you not looking for *El Niño?*"

"*Miséricorde!* And you?"

"Of course. Napoleon is extremely interested in this *Niño.* I am to find him and take him back to France. It sounds very simple. And so when I heard that you were here—you see we know all about you, we are most efficient in the secret police—I said to myself well, unquestionably we can help each other. A good joke, don't you think? I adore pleasantries of this sort. Will you help me to find *El Niño* for Napoleon, monsieur?"

The room roared with their gaiety. He was priceless, this de Valmy—*impayable* —Raoul told Mr. de la Motte afterward. Something about him, too—a ring of authority, a sharp gleam of command, like a fine blade. A great deal of feather, *beaucoup de panache.* They shook hands on their pleasantry. But seriously, Raoul reminded him, it was no joke, this business of *El Niño.*

"I know absolutely nothing!" Mr. de Valmy exclaimed. "I have been here six months and I have found out nothing. That is my brilliant contribution!"

Well, Raoul told him, he had done better than that. Ducros and the boatmen,

Raoul and Mr. de Valmy, a little of the same state of mind perhaps. Raoul had had an agent in Mexico—he did not feel like confessing to the killing of Ducros—he had found out things. Mr. de Valmy listened with the closest attention. He had not dared, he said, to attempt anything in Mexico himself. He had been expecting an agent of his own, but the man had not turned up.

Well, what to do? Two heads were better than one, but it would take more than four hands to rescue *El Niño* from a carriage on the way to the levee.

"But we won't try to do that," Mr. de Valmy said suddenly. "We'll wait at the levee and let the Spaniards bring him to us. That will also be an excellent joke."

"Bring him to us!" Raoul objected. "But at the levee they put him in a boat to take him to a ship."

"Precisely," Mr. de Valmy assured him. "They put him in our boat, and we take him to our ship. Do you see?"

"God save us!" Raoul marveled. "But that's not a bad idea."

It was an excellent idea, if it worked. And there was not one chance in a hundred that it would, Raoul kept telling Mr. de Valmy during the days that followed. But all that Mr. de Valmy would ever reply was "Barataria! Barataria!" That was the answer to the whole puzzle, Barataria.

"You know the blacksmith shop?" Mr. de Valmy explained to Raoul. "Pierre Lafitte and his brother Jean? Well, I've gotten to know them pretty well. Various little dealings—oh, it's no secret, a great many gentlemen in town have been dabbling in this contraband trade. Jean Lafitte is our man. He'll furnish the boat for the levee, and a fast sloop to take us down the river."

"But where are we to go in this sloop?" Raoul wanted to know.

"Only down to the Balise. To the house of one of the pilots up the bayous until we can go aboard a proper ship for Philadelphia. Just leave it to me. I'll arrange all that with the Lafittes."

The thing was really taking shape but new details were always occurring to Raoul.

"How are we to get to this sloop?" he asked. "There'll be an escort of some kind in the boat."

"Only one or two probably," Mr. de Valmy reasoned. "With the crew of the boat there wouldn't be room for very many additional people, and they won't be making any fuss. Quickly out of the carriage into the boat. Perhaps one or two gentlemen with *El Niño*, and away to the ship."

"Yes, and then?"

"And then we'll have them knocked on the head, those gentlemen, out in the stream, and row like lunatics for the sloop which will be all ready to slip her cable. She'll be anchored near Casa Calvo's ship so they won't notice anything at first."

"But on the ship?"

"On the ship they will probably fire at us, although they wouldn't want to hit the boy, but as it will be just at the moment of the exchange of flags in the Place d'Armes every one will think it is a salute. They have really arranged everything very conveniently, the Spaniards! If only they are on time with the carriage."

It might work. One chance in a hundred, but there was certainly nothing else to do. And then Raoul thought of another thing.

"We're a pretty pair of chameleons," he reminded Mr. de Valmy. "How can we be sure they'll take our boat at the levee? In all probability there'll be a boat from the ship."

"Oh, that," Mr. de Valmy admitted, "that, I must confess, has been giving me the ague. But this is what I think: Either there will be no boat from the ship, and we can hire all the ferries in advance —we'll have the whole of Barataria up here if necessary—so they'll have to take our boat, or else there will be a boat from the ship, in which case we'll have to send her back."

"Send her back?"

"Yes. I'll steal a sheet of official paper from the *cabildo* and write an order for

them to return to the ship at once. Plans postponed—you know, *mañana!* We'll dress one of our Baratarians up as a *sereno* and have him ready to hand the order to the boat if she comes."

"And if the boat doesn't go back in spite of the order?"

"Oh, then we can go to Havana and begin all over again," Mr. de Valmy laughed.

He was always in a good humor, anticipating the joke which was to be played on the Spaniards, confident of its success, always gay, undismayed, elegant, just walked out of his bandbox. Always the leader. Raoul was older, the first on the ground, it was he who had supplied all their knowledge of the Spanish plans; but it was Mr. de Valmy who stepped in and conducted the enterprise.

"He expects you to follow him," Raoul noted. "And for some reason I do, instinctively."

The days passed. The ceremony of transfer was set for Wednesday, November 30th. Throughout the *Vieux Carré* the Creoles were preparing tricolor cockades to put on their hats the moment the French flag went up. Some old French veterans had organized a squad to mount guard under the flagpole in the Place d'Armes during the short interim of the French administration.

"Like a guard of honor around a bier," Raoul recorded.

Mr. de Valmy seemed to have everything ready. A sloop came up the river and anchored near the Spanish ship. The uniform for the supposed *sereno* was made; the sailors' clothes which they were themselves to wear were at the blacksmith shop where they were to meet. Mr. de Valmy's absence from the *cabildo* was simplified by the fact that Mr. de Laussat had thought to invite Bernard Marigny to act as his aide on the great day. Mr. de Valmy had suggested to him that he think of it, as a gracious return for all their host's hospitality. Raoul paid Madame Pauline a month in advance, burned all his papers except his diary and wrote a long letter to Mr. de la Motte and another to Polly.

I hope to leave Orleans in a day or two, he told her. *"My plans are a little uncertain. If you do not hear from me again for some time it is because I am in the wilderness or in a ship. If you never hear from me again, I want to say that my last thought will be of you, my very dear Polly.*

That was on Monday night. The blacksmith shop was unusually crowded with Baratarians, come to see the ceremonies no doubt. Mr. de Valmy had the paper from the *cabildo.* Jean Lafitte was very busy, running around, haranguing people in his highflown way. Raoul's sailor trousers did not fit and had to be altered. It was being said that Etienne de Boré had consented to serve as mayor, but only until the Americans came.

Tuesday evening there was a tempest, wind and rain. It looked bad for the next day. The talk at the Suckling Calf was that the Spanish militia had refused to parade for the transfer, and that several of the young Creoles had offered to join the American company in case anything should happen. Mr. de Valmy was carrying remonstrances from Mr. de Laussat to the Marquis de Casa Calvo, getting himself soaked to the skin. The *serenos* had only bad news of the weather all night.

It was still raining on Wednesday morning, and the Spanish flag at the pole sagged mournfully. There was drumming over at the barracks, and a frequent excitement of bugles at the *comandancia* cavalry headquarters. The streets were rivers. Raoul surprized Madame Pauline by going out very early.

A little before noon, and the rain had stopped; the sun was struggling out in a surly sky. The Place d'Armes was jammed, the roofs of the houses packed, the balconies and windows bulging. The weather had kept no one at home. Troops were still parading, taking up their stations around the railings and in front of the *cabildo*—the Regiment of Louisiana, the Spanish militia which had finally consented to muster, detachments of *serenos.* Mr. de Laussat rolled by with Bernard Marigny; from the Government

House came the Marquis de Casa Calvo and Governor Salcedo in brilliant gold lace and satin, powdered and buckled; at the *cabildo* every one was arriving, the Archbishop, Madame de Laussat, the Royal Standard Bearer, the High Sheriff, the *Regidores* of the Cabildo Tribunal, the *alcaldes*. The cathedral bell commenced to toll, the crowds hummed. The Americans nudged each other and grinned.

Down at the levee Raoul and Mr. de Valmy sat in their boat counting heartbeats. The ferries were all away—for some reason a great many Baratarians had suddenly decided to cross to the other side. No boat had come from the ship, thank the Lord. A *sereno* was walking up and down the landing stage with a folded paper in his belt. Five minutes more.

"Keep quiet when they come," Mr. de Valmy warned Raoul. "Not too quick about offering the boat. Let them do the talking."

There was a roar from the Place d'Armes. The Commissioners were coming out of the *Sala Capitular* onto the balcony of the *cabildo*. Then a great silence while a proclamation was read. No carriage yet. Thundering applause, a gale of cheers; drums began to roll, Fort St. Charles replied with guns, the Spanish flag was falling, heavy with rain, reluctant. Still no carriage.

"My ——!" Raoul muttered. "Where are they? Where are they!"

A deafening din in the Place d'Armes now, Fort St. Charles blazing away, a fanfare of jubilant trumpets, everywhere the tricolor cockades. The French flag was going up, clean and fresh, eagerly unfurled to the wind. Timidly at first, more and more triumphantly as the throngs took up the refrain, accompanying the flag on its ascent to the mast-head, the "Marseillaise" arose. Raoul went scrambling out of the boat.

"They haven't come!" he cried. "We're cooked!"

Mr. de Valmy followed him on to the levee. The crowds were pouring away from the Place d'Armes, troops were again in motion, a squad of cavalry galloped toward Fort St. Charles; *serenos* were running in the direction of Toulouse Street. There was no sign of any carriage.

"Something has happened down there," Raoul exclaimed, and ran after the *serenos* without waiting for Mr. de Valmy.

Toulouse Street was blocked. People were milling around, hustling the *serenos*, trying to get close to a coach stalled in the roadway. A horse had fallen and broken his leg. They had just shot him. On the *banquette* a fat little gentleman was dancing up and down, calling on his high gods. One of the *Regidores* of the *cabildo*. Everybody was laughing at him.

"Poor man," Raoul heard them say, "he has gone mad! He keeps screaming about some one in the coach—a young man who was with him in the coach—but there is no one in the coach!"

Mr. de Valmy was not in sight. At the *comandancia* a sudden clamoring of bugles shook the air. Raoul started to run up the street, changed his mind and came back again, stopped to collect his wits, bumped into the little gentleman on the *banquette*.

"What have you done with the boy, you fat old fool?" Raoul heard himself shout, and took to his heels.

CHAPTER XI

COACH AND FOUR

AT ELEVEN o'clock that morning—the facts which are to follow were made known later to Raoul through various channels—they had come to the arsenal for *El Niño*.

"Señor," they informed him, "it will be necessary to leave this place in three-quarters of an hour."

The High Sheriff of the Cabildo, the Syndic, several other officials. They were all in a great stew apparently, laying down the law to a fat little gentleman. He must be sure and do this, he must be sure and do that, he must under no circumstances do the other. The little

gentleman was complaining loudly—the Marquis de Casa Calvo had no right to shift the responsibility on to the authorities of Louisiana, the orders from the Council of the Indies were for him to assume the custody of the prisoner, the whole performance was outrageous! No one paid any attention to the little gentleman's complaints.

"And where are we going so suddenly?" *El Niño* asked them. "Why is my itinerary disarranged? Why have I not been informed of this sooner?"

The futile protests of a captive—but delivered in fluent Spanish, one learns, in a tone of accustomed mastery which they received with immediately solicitous deference.

"Señor, it has been thought best to convey Your Excellency to Havana," they explained. "The decision was only recently arrived at. This gentleman will have the honor of accompanying Your Excellency."

The fat little gentleman—one of the *Regidores* of the Cabildo. *El Niño* gave him his hand.

"I will let you know whether I wish to go to Havana," he announced, and went to his apartments.

Behind his back they smiled discreetly at one another. He had always done that, always maintained his pretense of independence—ever since that fool at Mexico City had let him find out that he was the King of France—and they humored him, admiring his spirit. Of course when the moment came he would be ready, poor young man. He had only once tried to translate his pretense into practice, the time at Pensacola when they had carried him out finally to his coach before the escort with a pillow case over his head. Every one had laughed at him and he had learned then—it was in 1801—never again to make himself ridiculous.

At a quarter to twelve they presented themselves at his private threshold. Was it His Excellency's wish to go to Havana? Then it was time to start. They passed down the staircase, out of the massive door, to a carriage at the corner of Royal Street. St. Anthony's Alley was cleared of traffic, there were *serenos* everywhere and a squad of cavalry alongside the coach. *El Niño* got in, followed by the fat little gentleman. The others stood on the *banquette*, hat in hand.

"*Adios, señor!* God be with you." They were really quite fond of the tall blue-eyed boy. He was eighteen now, a proper *caballero*, a little pale but well filled out, handsome as the day.

"*Hasta la vista, señores*, until we meet again!" He waved his hand to them. The troopers closed in; the coach rolled off.

FRANCIS did not in the least desire to go to Havana. The Spaniards had not discussed the matter with him, of course, but for long months he had understood perfectly the purpose of his captivity. Almost as soon as he had accustomed himself to the astounding discovery of his identity. If he was the King of France then he was a prisoner of state and the Spaniards were planning to use him for their own diplomatic ends. Depending on conditions in Europe he might spend all his days journeying from one Spanish stronghold to another.

But Havana was a worse place than Mexico City or Orleans. In Havana, at the Morro, the likelihood of rescue was infinitely more remote; on the mainland, especially at Orleans, there had always been a possibility. Francis had received no news from the world, except the censored Spanish generalities; he had never been able to send out any word of himself—they watched him too closely and had handed him back the only letter he had ever been able to have smuggled out—but he had always assumed that at Greenwich they would be looking for him, in spite of that deceptive note about the frigate; that at Philadelphia Mr. de la Motte and his friends would be making a possibly more successful effort to find him, since Francis realized now that they must have recogized him for the Dauphin—that was why Mr. de la Motte had been so interested. But in Havana there would be little that they could do,

and after Havana it would probably be Spain.

Francis was determined not to go to Havana. He must escape before they put him on the ship, escape from this carriage before it reached the levee. A senseless hope, and yet never before had he been so lightly guarded—only this fat little gentleman in the coach with him, and a few soldiers. Usually there was a bigger retinue and a whole troop of cavalry. If ever there had been a glimmering chance it was now. Poke the *Regidor* in the stomach, jump out of the carriage, run for it. Francis was pretty certain that they would not shoot at him. He was of no use to them dead.

The coach had turned into Toulouse Street. Francis was wondering why the cathedral bell was tolling so, and now those salvos of artillery. They were nearly down to Chartres Street, slithering along through the mud, when suddenly one of the horses fell, piling the whole conveyance up in a commotion of outcries and tangled harness. The horse was floundering under the legs of his mates, screaming with pain. The cavalrymen of the escort pushed forward, dismounting. The fat little gentleman leaned out of his window, chattering excitedly.

Francis put his hand on the knob of the door on his side.

The horses of the dismounted troopers masked him from the men for an instant. Francis scrambled through the coach door while the *Regidor* was still leaning out of the other window, and started to run —— for leather up Toulouse Street through the mire. At best he would only have a few seconds' start. He must turn the corner of Royal Street as quickly as possible. But not to the right, in the dirction of the arsenal—there had been *serenos* stationed along those islets. To the left then, toward St. Louis Street. Francis heard frantic shouts behind him and popped around the blessed corner, going like mad.

It all happened very quickly. The Spaniards, it appears, wasted precious moments attempting to figure out what the fat little gentleman was having hysterics about, bumping into each other when they all tried to mount at once after they grasped the boy's flight.

Francis was running full blast down Royal Street, expecting at every breath to hear the uproar of pursuit behind him —and suddenly he saw that he was headed straight for the *comandancia*. Sentries, and *serenos*, and troopers; it was fatal to go that way. He stopped short, doubled back up the *banquette*, realized that he would be cut off at the corner, stopped again, hesitated. A cavalryman went tearing up Toulouse Street, across the opening of Royal. The others must be just after him, some of them would scatter right and left on Royal. Here they came now! And a coach trundled out of a *porte-cochère* which clanged behind it, wheeling into the street toward St. Louis in front of Francis, blocking the view from Toulouse.

It was vanish instantly or be caught. The troopers were splashing down the roadway. Never mind who might be in the carriage! Francis sprang for the step, yanked the door open while the coachman was making his turn, stumbled headlong into the coach. The troopers galloped past.

In the other corner, sound asleep apparently, was a girl.

Francis stared at her. A very beautiful girl, quite young, with lovely brown ringlets under her veil, arched eyebrows and long lashes accentuating the Creole pallor, a delicious little nose above an adorable mouth. And sound asleep, her slender hands folded in her white calico lap, a quiet regularity of breathing animating her high-waisted bodice and the little bead necklace around her throat.

Sound asleep. It embarrassed Francis to death, as if he had climbed though a window and found himself unintentionally in a strange young lady's bedroom. What was she doing, sleeping in a coach? He had had a whole chapter of glib apologies on his tongue for whomever he might find in the carriage, anticipated outcries and indignation, armed himself with persuasion and petition. Instead, here he

was in a coach going the Lord knew where—down St. Louis Street on to the levee—with a sleeping girl at his side. He must awaken her, and this somehow seemed to him enormously difficult, unforgivably impertinent. He ought not to touch her, it was imprudent to shout at her, not for worlds did he want to frighten her.

Francis almost wished that he had stayed in the street and let the soldiers find him. It was idiotic to have gotten into this coach. It might have been the Governor of Louisiana's coach for all he knew. This girl, she might be the Governor of Louisiana's daughter. He must awaken her. It would be best to poke her gently with a finger, poke her in the arm, the little bare arm next to him. Perhaps if he did it quickly she would wake up without knowing that he had poked her.

Francis pointed a diffident finger—and realized that she was watching him through one half-opened eye.

"You were going to poke me," she remarked, and opened both her eyes very wide. Magnificent brown eyes.

"It was only to tell you that I was here." Francis hastily withdrew the finger. "Please do not be frightened, mademoiselle."

"I'm not," she informed him. "That is, I'm not any more. I was—that is why I pretended to be asleep. I always do that when I think that there are robbers in the house. If you are asleep, ten to one they won't harm you. But you are not a robber, are you monsieur?"

"No mademoiselle, I am not a robber." Francis smiled, wondering what she would say if he were to tell her that he was the King of France. And he explained to her what had happened—not the whole truth, but simply that he had escaped from some men who were planning to kidnap him and that the coach had been his only shelter. If she would stop the coachman he would get out and not trouble her any longer.

"Oh, no!" she cried. "Oh, please! You mustn't get out! I don't mind your getting in if it saved you from danger, Monsieur, but you mustn't get out."

Not get out—but why not?

"Oh, that would be terrible!" she insisted. "No one saw you get in, but if you get out now all these people will see you"—they were on the levee in front of the Place d'Armes—"and every one will know that I had a young gentleman in my coach. Oh, Monsieur, you mustn't do that!"

But what was so terrible about that, Francis wanted to know. And one coach was just like another, surely?

"Oh, no!" there was genuine panic in her big round eyes. "Every one knows my coachman, and that my aunt—I live with my aunt—that she is paralyzed and never drives out, and it is not correct in Orleans for young ladies to be seen with young gentlemen. The whole town would talk of it and I should die of shame."

"God forbid!" Francis exclaimed. "But I can not stay in your coach indefinitely, Mademoiselle! I shall have to get out some time. Unless we are to go on driving like this forever. That wouldn't be so bad!" he added, with the first glance at her out of the corner of his eye which invited any sort of reply from hers.

She put out her little hand and touched him lightly for a second on the arm, while a twinkle of merriment rippled her features.

"Isn't it scandalous?" she asked him.

"Wonderfully!" he agreed with her.

But she had returned immediately to her solemn, quick-breathing concern over their predicament. He must not get out of the coach in any public place. He would have to sit there while she did her errand at the Ursuline convent, and then she would contrive to drive him somewhere. She could manage matters with the coachman, but no one else must see him.

"The Ursuline convent?" Francis inquired.

Yes, she was on her way to see the new Mother Superior. She had promised to visit her on that afternoon, to hearten that good lady and discount her fears

over the transfer of the colony from Spain to republican France. It was the first that Francis had heard of it. He had been a prisoner for some time. Louisiana was French again then? Yes, until the Americans came.

"Yes, monsieur, if you call those Jacobins French." The girl was all white fire. "I did not go to see the ceremony; I am royalist, monsieur—we Santo Domingans can never be anything else—I could not bear to see that tricolor flag of the dreadful Republic which massacred our sovereigns and caused the death of the poor little Dauphin."

Francis was infinitely touched. He had not understood that people still cared so much. Not like the Spaniards selfishly for political purposes, but personally with devotion and regret.

"I have always admired those who served the white flag with the golden lilies," he felt that he must tell her.

"Oh, then you are one of us!" She clapped her hands, smiling delightedly. "You favor the white cockade, monsieur?"

"I do not favor any particular cockade," he replied more prudently. "I am an American."

"Oh, an American." He could see that she hated the word. "They will soon be here, the Americans. Mother Superior is afraid of them, too."

"They are not such ogres, mademoiselle," he tried to persuade her.

They had talked too much. The coach was rolling by the convent wall, drawing up to the gate. The girl turned to him anxiously, her eyes beseeching his.

"I must get out," she reminded him. "Stay in the coach, monsieur, I beg you. Keep yourself hidden in the corner. Promise me."

"Nothing could drag me from this coach now," he assured her, a little ambiguously, with bold answering eyes.

"Oh, I'm so frightened!" she exclaimed.

"You are a miracle of courage," he insisted. "And an angel of kindness."

"And you, *Monsieur l'Américain*, you are a great nuisance!" she flashed at him.

She was at the door of the carriage, ready to jump out before the coachman could look in at the window. Francis caught her hand and squeezed it with all his might.

"Come back quickly, mademoiselle," he whispered.

For an instant her fingers seemed to tighten around his. She was on the *banquette*.

"Stay at the horses' heads," she instructed the negro. "The streets are so noisy today."

Francis huddled himself in the corner. The convent gate clicked.

RAOUL DE VENDOME had gone tearing across the town, pushing his way through the dispersing crowds to the blacksmith shop. Mr. de Valmy might have gone there to wait for him. There might be some news. But no one had seen Mr. de Valmy. The place was almost empty, the Baratarians had scattered, there was a rumor, some one told Raoul while he was jumping into his own clothes, of a commotion at Fort St. Charles. Some one had been arrested by the Spaniards and hustled over to the fort, although the French were supposed to be in command now. It was actually the fat little gentleman of Toulouse Street, paying the price of his misfortune, but to Raoul it could only mean *El Niño*. They had caught the boy again and shut him up and any complaint to the French authorities would only precipitate his fall into Republican hands.

Still, Raoul determined to make his way to the fort and see what information could be picked up. He left a message for Mr. de Valmy, started down St. Philippe Street. A detachment of Spanish militia crossed his path and he followed them, thinking that they might be going to the fort for some special purpose. Around several turns, down past the gate of the Ursuline convent they went, frightening the horses of a coach drawn up alongside the *banquette*. The coachman was struggling with the bridles as Raoul passed them in the roadway.

Just abreast of the coach some one called him.

"Psst! Mr. de Vendome! Here!"

It was some one in the coach. A young man. Raoul did not know him.

"Mr. de Vendome! Don't you know me? It's Francis, Francis Vincent!"

"*Miséricorde!*" Raoul nearly jumped out of his skin and sprang forward of course to the coach window. "I would never have known you—"

Francis was gesticulating desperately.

"Go away!" he insisted. "Meet me on the levee—go away—don't stand there! Oh lord!' The bars of the convent gate were being drawn, Raoul was standing with his mouth open, Francis lost his head completely. "Get in, for lord's sake!" he decided suddenly. "Don't let them see you—get in!"

Raoul found himself inside the coach, on the front seat.

"What the ——," he exclaimed, but Francis clapped a hand over his mouth.

"Shut up!" he commanded. "Oh, lord, what a mess! Why did I call to you? I might have known you'd stand there—now there are two of us!"

There were voices on the *banquette,* at the convent gate.

"I'm going to get out of here," Raoul announced.

Francis caught him around the neck, wrestling with him on the front seat.

"Sit still," he growled. "You can get in, but you can't get out—hush!"

The window on the *banquette* side was blocked, the door swung open. An old lady was climbing in, an old lady in a long black cloak, with the close-fitting head-dress and white and black veils of the Ursulines. The girl in white calico got in after her.

"Mother Superior," she began as the coach rolled off—and caught sight of Raoul wedged in behind Francis. "Holy angels help me!"

There was a fearful silence. The Mother Superior gazed without enthusiasm at the two young men in front of her. The two young men gazed back at her.

CHAPTER XII

THE GOLDEN LILIES

"MY DAUGHTER," the Mother Superior remarked finally, "you did not tell me there were two young gentlemen. You said one young gentleman. And that was already one young gentleman too many."

"She didn't know," Francis was eager to explain. "It's not her fault. There was only one of us when mademoiselle got out. I kept telling this imbecile to go away—"

"That is not true at all!" Raoul had no intention of taking any of the blame. "He told me to go away, and then he told me to get in, and when I tried to get out again he wouldn't let me go. Do not be angry with me, Mother Superior!"

The girl had been smoldering in her corner.

"And do not be angry with me, Mother Superior!" she cried. "I was sitting quietly in my coach on my way to you when this one, this American, comes climbing in and tells me that he has escaped from some men who have been trying to kidnap him. Out of the kindness of my heart I let him get in. I make up my mind to drive him somewhere so that he can get out without attracting attention, he promises me faithfully that he will hide quietly in the coach while I am at the convent, and when I come out again I find that he has invited a friend! Another American, I suppose. I ask you, Mother Superior, is not that outrageous?"

"You did not say that you were going to bring any one with you when you came back," Francis challenged her. "I thought I was doing the best thing when I told this fellow to get in so he wouldn't be seen—he wouldn't go away, so I made him get in—and then, mademoiselle, you wouldn't trust me after all, but you brought some one out with you."

"Oh, you're perfectly hateful," the girl flamed at him. "I've been very good to you and that's all the thanks I get. A little while ago I was a miracle of

courage, and now I suppose you think I'm frightened. What if I didn't trust you! Was I not right? Do you deserve to be trusted? Have you had any regard for me? Filling my coach with young gentlemen the moment my back was turned. You have behaved detestably, monsieur."

"All right," Francis exclaimed. "Fly into a temper, say anything you want. I did it all on purpose, of course. I am a mammoth of wickedness, Mother Superior. Be just as angry as you please with me!"

The Mother Superior smiled at him, and her fine, delicate old face was like a benediction.

"But my dear children," she reminded them, "how very foolish you are, all of a sudden. I am not angry with any one. I simply came to chaperon your delightful little drive."

She was a jewel, the Mother Superior, Raoul thought to himself. Wise and good and kind, quick-witted and graced with humor. And the girl, what a flashing vision of loveliness, but how angry she was with Francis! She sat in her corner staring down at her hands, silent, hostile, a statue of resentment. He was fidgeting about on his seat in front of her, the Dauphin—and that was a situation too—trying to attract her attention, storing up courage to speak to her, but she would not raise her eyes. Raoul wondered who she was, this girl. There had been no presentations, the Dauphin must not be allowed to plunge into an affair.

"Forgive me," Raoul ventured, "but are we going far?"

"Far enough in your company, monsieur," the girl informed him.

The Mother Superior pursed her lips, but she said nothing. A less intelligent woman would have delivered the obvious rebuke. Raoul did not ask any more questions. The coach stopped before a *porte-cochère*.

"Thank you a thousand times, Mother Superior," the girl glanced at her. "These gentlemen will remain in the coach and accompany you back to the convent."

She leaned forward to open the door. Francis put out his hand and withdrew it again.

"Mademoiselle," he implored her, "do not go away like that! I have not thanked you—"

She stepped out onto the *banquette* and slammed the door behind her. The coach moved off.

"A sweet, charming girl," the Mother Superior turned talkative suddenly. "I've known her ever since she was a child, she was one of my pupils at the convent. A lovely nature, so gentle, so charitable."

The two young men stared gloomily at her.

"Of course she was angry just now. It is not every day that a well bred young lady of Orleans—I speak of the Creole ladies—has her coach used as a public conveyance by strange gentlemen off the street."

Raoul leaned back and grinned. She was delicious, the Mother Superior.

"I thought it extremely courageous of her," she continued, "to accept the emergency thrust upon her with so much calm. In her place at her age I should have called for the *serenos*. And of course her idea of having me join her was an excellent one. There could be no question of impropriety in my presence. In a few moments you will both leave the coach with me and no one will think anything of it."

"Oh, I know," Francis admitted. "I'm a perfect ass. She was trying to help me all the time and save her face."

"After you escaped from those men who were trying to kidnap you," Raoul nudged Francis, "how did you happen to get into this coach in the first place?"

Francis explained to them what had happened, without referring to the Spaniards, and described to the Mother Superior how he had seen Raoul and called to him before he realized what he was doing.

"This is my friend, Mr. de Vendome," he presented him. "I knew him at New York."

"And this is Mr. Francis Jones," Raoul nudged Francis again. After all, the name Francis Vincent was too well known in certain circles. It would be best for the Dauphin's protection to use another name.

"I will place your names in my prayers, my sons," the Mother Superior assured them. "I fear that you are both of you violent young men. Very foolish young men."

"Don't stop," Francis smiled at her. "Go on, Mother Superior, scold me. Tell me how many kinds of a fool I have been this afternoon."

"Blue eyes!" she answered his smile, and touched him lightly on the forehead.

"And tell me her name?" he begged her.

"Ah, no," she refused. "That I will not do. No, I will not tell you her name."

"I know where she lives," Francis reminded her. "On Royal Street."

"No," the Mother Superior shook her head. "She does not live on Royal Street. That was not her house that you saw her coming out of and where we have just left her. No, my son, you do not know where she lives. And you will be well advised not to recognize her if you should see her on the street. Above all not to follow her. I forbid you to do that."

"I do not like you at all any more, Mother Superior!" Francis complained.

"I am desolated," she laughed at him, and addressed Raoul. "How do you happen to be in Orleans, monsieur?" she asked him. "Were you looking for your friend? Oh, you needn't be afraid to tell me."

"Yes," Raoul tried to choose his words. "I and some of my friends knew of this kidnapping. Mr. Jones was held for a big ransom. It's a long story, but we had actually arranged a rescue today when he escaped alone—you upset all our plans, Francis!"

"I see." She nodded. "You knew about the kidnapping and you had yourself arranged a rescue?"

"Yes, Mother Superior."

"Your name is de Vendome? The godson of the Duke de Colignac? You have been living in Philadelphia with Mr. de la Motte and the Duke de la Roche?"

"Yes, Mother Superior—how did you know?"

"I have tried to keep track of all the lost children of France in America," she replied. "In our house the golden lilies are still remembered."

"They are not forgotten elsewhere, Mother Superior!"

Raoul stole a glance at Francis. Mr. Jones was smiling in his corner. Did he know, Raoul wondered; had the Spaniards told him, had he found out? The coach had stopped. They got out, hat in hand before the Mother Superior. The coachman sat staring straight ahead of him. The door slammed and he called to his horses. The convent gate was open.

"I should like to speak with you both for a moment in my *parloir*," the Mother Superior suggested. "Come in, my sons."

They followed her in, down the broad path to the columned entrance under the scalloped pediment supporting the ornamental cross. A gallery across the front of the building, behind a shapely balustrade; two graceful fanlights, one above the other; a pleasant design of carving under the row of upper windows; a great dignity to the edifice without severity, a mingling of simplicity and beauty, in the garden a great security and repose. She led them to the *parloir*.

They stood waiting for her to speak, but she went immediately instead to the *prie-dieu* below the crucifix and kneeled down.

"We give thanks, O Lord," she astonished them with the unexpected words, "for the safe delivery from captivity of this Thy servant, and we beseech Thy blessing upon the head of Charles Louis, by Thy grace King of France."

She had known all along, then. That was why she had questioned Raoul so carefully and made sure of his allegiance to the golden lilies. He glanced quickly at Francis and dropped on one knee before him.

The Mother Superior arose.

"Be very welcome in this humble house, Son of France," she bowed to him, and would have kneeled too, but Francis sprang to her side and prevented her, leading her to a chair.

"Oh don't!" he exclaimed. "I used to make the Spaniards do it after they told me, but not you! Get up, Mr. de Vendome—don't begin treating me like a relic!"

He sat down suddenly on the cushion at her feet and took her hand in his.

"How did you know, Mother Superior?" he asked her.

"I knew right away in the coach that you were *El Niño*," she informed him. "I saw you last year in the sacristy of the cathedral when they let you come to Francisco Bouligny's funeral. I was the nun praying at the foot of the coffin while he was lying in state. And of course I have known for some time who *El Niño* was. Such things can not long be kept secret. You knew in Philadelphia, did you not, Mr. de Vendome?"

"Yes," Raoul explained, "as soon as we heard of the prisoner the Spaniards were keeping. You see, we were there in Philadelphia the night the Spanish Minister must have kidnapped Francis Vincent—Francis Jones— Forgive me, Mother Superior. I have told you a great many lies this afternoon!"

They began to talk both at once, the two young men, describing the events of the past five years, piecing together the two accounts, while the Mother Superior sat quietly listening to the violent tale—the seizure in the crowd in front of Dyde's Hotel, the affair at Princeton, the fracas at the Red Bonnet, the Dauphin's story of how the Spanish Minister's people had come climbing in at the window after him, the killing of Ducros—for Raoul concealed nothing now—the failure of the rescue which Mr. de Valmy had planned.

"So much violence," she said finally. "So much tribulation already. And you have scarcely begun to live, my sons. You were born in a fatal day into unfortunate boyhoods, children of a dark inheritance. Your young manhood spent in exile, your homes ravaged, your families destroyed—" she put her hand on the Dauphin's head—"your sainted father and mother, my son! You do not remember, I suppose?"

"Like a dream, Mother Superior," he sighed. "Lately I have tried very hard to remember. In my mind there are figures that come and go. I do not know who they are."

"You have forgotten," she let her voice ring through the room, "but God does not forget. The blood spilled upon the scaffold will be remembered. In His own appointed time France will arise again, the France of your forefathers, arise from the ashes of her desolation more glorious and more mighty."

"When the King returns!" Raoul cried out, catching her mood.

"Yes," she replied. "When the King returns. When the golden lilies shine again above the fields of France."

The Dauphin looked from one to the other.

"Do you care so much?" he marveled. "In France, are they waiting for that day? Do they know my name and do they think of me so eagerly?"

"In every hamlet and village of your kingdom," the Mother Superior proclaimed, "from Normandy to Aquitaine, men and women have never ceased to pray for the king's return. You, my son, they have been taught to believe are dead—but go among your people, make yourself known, and learn the welcome that awaits you."

"They would be glad?" he insisted.

"Why do you ask?" She looked down into his upturned face.

"Because I have made a decision, Mother Superior," he told her. "I will not go back to France."

"My son, what are you saying!" the Mother Superior exclaimed. "You have no choice. You belong to France."

"France!" he cried. "They murdered my father and mother, in France, they drove me into the forests of the Vendée, sent me a fugitive to America. I am absolved. I owe no debt to France!"

"That was an insane France," she reminded him. "The fault was not all one-sided. In your family, my son, terrible mistakes have been made. But the true France claims you. To her you owe the debt of your birth and of your heritage. You were born to be her king, and her you must serve."

"No," he maintained. "I will not go back. I made up my mind as soon as the Spaniards told me—I will not go back. Kings—what are kings, marionettes to be driven along the roads? I have had enough of that. I have other things to do. In France now, in America, all men are free and equal. Is it only the kings who must be slaves? No, I will not go back."

"Why don't you say something?" the Mother Superior appealed to Raoul. "Don't you hear what he is trying to tell us?"

Raoul had heard the Dauphin with an infinite amazement to which, in spite of the sentimental emotion which the Mother Superior's words had for the moment aroused within him, a feeling of profound satisfaction was rapidly succeeding. If he did not want to go back to France, this boy, why should he be forced to do so? Raoul himself did not want to go back to France, to fight and starve his way through the Vendée. He only wanted to go back to Greenwich! It had always appeared to him ridiculous, extravagant, this mania of the "old ones" at Philadelphia to restore something which had ceased to exist, which for Raoul had really never existed. The dear Mother Superior was an old one too, speaking in phrases of another age. And now the boy did not want to be king. Raoul was delighted.

"Yes, I hear," he said. "And I agree with him. He has a right to decide."

The Mother Superior threw up her hands. Francis sprang to his feet.

"There, you see!" he laughed. "Liberty! Free men in a free country! That's what we want to be. Go out into the world and live. For five years I have sat in a chair and watched people bow to me. Never again. The king is dead—long live Francis Vincent!"

"Francis Jones," Raoul warned him. The other name was too well known—Mr. de la Motte, Mr. de Valmy, all of them knew it. They must not be told, any of them, or there would be trouble. Mr. de Valmy did not know him by sight. The Dauphin must disappear entirely. More lies!

"All right, long live Francis Jones then!" He was jubilant, excited, full of questions. Where was he to stay? Until the Spaniards left, until the Americans came, he must hide. Did Raoul know of a place? Could he get some money, some clothes?

"Yes, yes, yes," Raoul kept assuring him. Something would be arranged. They would manage. He glanced at the Mother Superior.

Francis went back to her chair.

"Are you angry?" he asked her. "Is it so wrong what I want to do? Mr. de Vendome is willing. Won't you help me? Couldn't you have been mistaken this afternoon when you saw *El Niño* in the coach?"

She was silent under her veils. There was a knock at the door.

"Come in!"

It was a postulant.

"Mère Supérieure—" she bowed—"there is a gentleman asking to see you, if you are still receiving visitors, Mr. de Colignac."

"Show him in," the Mother Superior replied immediately.

TO BE CONTINUED

The Superstitious Sailor

BY

JOHN WEBB

"DESPITE the fact that sailing vessels have almost entirely given way to steamships, sailors still cling to their old-time superstitions. . . ."

"The superstitious sailors thought it an ill omen. . . ."

"Sailors believe that if there is a cross-eyed person aboard, the steering of the ship is affected. . . ."

"A sailor never whistles, because whistling is believed to bring stormy winds. . . ."

"A hatch cover upside down on deck invites misfortune. . . ."

Nonsense!

Sea superstitions are mostly myths invented by landsmen. Your true seaman is the most hard-headed of men. In the past, far back, seamen were undoubtedly superstitious, but never as much so as folk ashore. When forecastle hands were half-jokingly speculating upon whether Finns really brought bad weather, landsmen were solemnly accusing harmless old women of being witches in league with the Evil One, and burning them at the stake. When landsmen were positive that beyond the edge of the world lay boiling waters inhabited by terrible demons, Columbus and his "superstitious sailors" set out and showed the landsmen how silly and childish they were. Go back in history as far as you like and you'll find that the sailor has always faced the supernatural with a bolder countenance than his brother ashore. The reason is obvious: In time of storm, lightning, fog, thunder, he is not privileged to run and hide under the bed.

As to whistling: No, he does not whistle aboard ship. The reason is, he is not allowed. In the U. S. Navy whistling is against regulations. Likewise in the U. S. Army. Likewise in any well ordered business office, department store, factory, police department and in the United States Supreme Court. Whistling isn't seamanlike. Another reason is that many signals and calls at sea are passed by means of the bosun's pipe, and if the bosun must compete with a gang of "canary birds" blowing " 'vast-heaving" or "belay" between their teeth, as an amusement, confusion is likely to result. Prosaic reasons, to be sure, and not as interesting as the reason behind the United States Government's failure to get two-dollar bills in circulation, but true, nevertheless. It may be said in passing that seamen are rather fond of two-dollar bills.

As to the upside-down-hatch-cover superstition—rot! Not one sailor in a thousand has ever heard of it. If a ship's mate discovered that a hand was wasting his time in placing hatch covers in any particular position, to ward off ill luck, he would put the fellow down as a landsman and chase him ashore, and hire a seaman.

It is only the well read seaman who knows of the superstitions that are supposed to belong to the sea; the average seaman, poorly read but equipped with a certain amount of native intelligence, thinks superstition is confined to walking around ladders, being careful of mirrors, crossing one's fingers when sighting a cross-eyed person, refusing two-dollar bills, seeing the moon over the right shoulder—or is it the left?—keeping umbrellas closed within the house, making a wish when a hay wagon passes, exhorting the sky for rain, looking for water with a forked stick, handling the saltshaker with care—all landlubber foolishness.

In short, the superstitious sailor, comparatively speaking, is a myth. But try to convince a superstitious landsman of that!

EL REY *of the Beak-Nose*

The Society of Condors

THE fierce-eyed young man's abrupt statement was in itself merely an ancient bucolic triteness and might have come from any straw-chewing, back-country farmer. Yet something in the manner of the speaker was more impressive than his words.

The American newspaper man cocked his eye sidewise under lifted brow and over cupped hands which sheltered his match from the hot, wet Pacific breeze. White smoke oozed between his sunburnt fingers and eddied in a heavy cloud which hid his face from his bench companion's almost ferocious gaze. Under its cover he smiled quizzically.

His name was Benson and he was covering the Chile-Peru tangle over the Tacna-Arica border for his syndicate. He had already met many such as this young fellow; patriots, enthusiasts, propagandists—anxious, every one of them, to impress his particular side of the wrangle upon the press of North America. On arriving at Arica Benson, as supremely ignorant of conditions as were the rest of the American commission which was going to settle the dispute with the stroke of the pen, had foolishly let the fact of his profession leak out at the hotel. Now he was unable to get away from the propagandists.

It was March, late fall in Arica. The newspaper man noticed, along with a hundred other bewildering new impressions, what a strictly North-American term that word is. For nothing fell in Arica. No leaves—there were no deciduous trees. No snow, of course, so close under the Equator. But, what was extraordinarily worse, no rain. Never under any circumstances at all. And it was just that unusual condition that occasioned two wars and now had two nations bristling at one another over their borders.

Half a mile to the east behind the tiny town rose the abrupt slopes of the Cordillera, brown, arid, utterly desiccated, towering ridge beyond scorched ridge of "absolute desert," which the newspaper man had learned was a scientific term meaning where nothing grows at all; not even cactus, for even cactus must have a certain modicum of moisture. Across the face of the bare cliffs a wide black ribbon zigzagged—the Chilean cog-wheel railroad to La Paz in the far Altiplano of Bolivia, the black deposit being the coal smuts of twelve years, never washed down.

Half a mile to the south loomed the sinister cliff of El Morro, sheer six hundred feet to the ocean front, where a very

and the Grafting Politicos

By GORDON MacCREAGH

efficient Chilean garrison, nobody knew exactly how strong these days, maintained itself. Half a mile to the north rose the ugly gray tanks of the Standard Oil depository. Beyond that, sand—blank, impossible sand, stretching for a hundred useless miles to the angry border of Peru. Only Arica, the rail-head town, remained a thin oasis of dust-encrusted near-green, for a miraculous spring came from somewhere at the base of the forbidding cliffs.

The newspaper man had withdrawn himself unobtrusively to a bench in the tiny plaza fronting the sea. There, under the shade of a bougainvillea which blazed scarlet above him almost as hot as the sun which it screened, he had hoped for peace and a little fresh air, while he watched the seals bobbing off the little Island of Scorpions which broke the vast Pacific rollers, and the endless miles of pelicans and guano birds which flew forever northward, going somewhere or other, following the Humboldt current.

And now came this man to plague him anew, with that something about him that forbade the putting of him off with empty generalities, as Benson had learned to do with the others. Those others had ranged the whole gamut from zealots to fanatics—patriots all, each with his own row to hoe. This one looked to be zealot too, but no wild-eyed, arm-waving fanatic. He was more self contained, or better balanced perhaps. What he said meant something. He had just concluded a brief—and to the newspaper man most enlightening—history of the nitrate fields of Iquique farther south which existed for the sole reason that rain never fell to dissolve the valuable fertilizer and soak it in solution deep into the ground. These nitrate fields had been the cause of all the bickering between Chile and Peru, and even more unfortunate Bolivia.

"You will agree therefore, señor," the young man said, "that all this territory over which the politicians of Peru and Chile are now squabbling should belong by rights to Bolivia, who needs her outlet to the sea."

The American newspaper man smiled quizzically behind his cigar smoke and remarked with dryness—

"I take it, then, sir, that you are a Bolivian."

The somber man flashed white teeth.

"But by no means, señor! No, I am not Boliviano. But what I hope from your North American commission here is a justice out of all this quarreling."

The newspaper man lifted an eyebrow and pushed himself up to a more erect posture on the bench. This man

was distinctly unusual, and it is in the unusual that good copy is to be found. All those others with their long expositions of heaped-up wrongs had turned out to be patriotic propagandists for the country whose side they extolled. But one who wanted impartial justice was something new.

This one did not look at all like a peace-at-any-price pacifist. He was tall, as are many South Americans, though not as slightly built as most. His shoulders and hips, suggestively outlined under his thin panama suit of real silk, indicated athletics of some of the more strenuous kinds. His face was dark and emotional, as are those of many South Americans, but there the whole unusualness of him stood out and demanded attention. The emotions all over it were not the ebullitions of the uncurbed Latin. The wide open eyes were full of lights and shadows, now sparkling, now somber to the point of brooding—the eyes of an enthusiast. The mouth was wide and tight-lipped—a mouth of decision. The nose, that outstanding feature, stood out with startling suddenness, a great Roman beak that might have been taken *in toto* off the bronze bust of the Emperor Titus.

The young man pointed with this beak of his, as a bird might, across the shore line beyond the gray Standard Oil tanks.

"Yes, justice out of all this mess," he repeated. "Look there, Señor Americano. Sand. Bare barren sand, a hundred miles of it, worth nothing to any man or beast. Yet Peru is clamoring for a plebiscite and the *politicos* are plying all their tricks of talk and intrigue to bring in Peruvian voters. To what end? That Peru may once again boast the ownership of this emptiness. *Dios*, what a vast folly of popular sentiment! They will never plunder again from Chile as far as the nitrate fields."

"Ah!" The newspaper man was satisfied. "So you are a Chilean!"

The white teeth flashed again.

"By no means, señor! No Chileno I."

The beak pointed to the southern side.

"See there the rock of El Morro. There are a dozen so named in South America, since the term means nose or promontory; and each one has its story, more or less false, promulgated by those who have an interest in keeping alive popular sentiments. A Chileno garrison holds this one, and the story is that when they captured it not a man of the Peruano garrison was left alive. They died fighting? Some of them, yes. The rest 'fell' over the cliff—with Chileno bayonets at their stomachs. Such is the story."

The newspaper man was not so certain this time, yet his experience with all those other propagandists was fresh in his mind.

"Is it possible, then," he hazarded, "that you are a Peruvian?"

The anomaly's moody recital of international wrongs ceased for long enough to permit another quick smile at the other's mystification. Then the somber eyes turned fiercely earnest and a sinewy brown finger punctuated his statements.

"You, señor, are North American and doubtless a patriot. In spite of the political conditions in your country you hope that perhaps some day your people will struggle somehow to a condition of

democracy as your great founders visualized it. So, señor, is it with me. No Boliviano nor Chileno nor Peruano am I; but South American. In all our vast country conditions are as unfortunate as in yours, and in some cases even worse. We are in the hands of the *politicos*. And why?

"Señor, the answer is very simple. Because they are men who make politics their profession; while we, the great rest of the people, talk sometimes about politics a little and once a year or so some of us go out and vote. We are the amateurs; and it is an indisputable rule in every human endeavor that professionals inevitably and always have the advantage over amateurs."

Benson hitched himself uncomfortably higher on the bench. This earnest thinker's conclusions about local conditions were almost an accusation. He himself, and also all his friends back home, were just that—amateurs. He had nothing to offer but the standard defense of democracy.

"Well, you vote your representatives into power don't you?"

Apparently that was what the man was waiting for.

"Assuredly we vote them in," he flashed. "But permit me an impertinence—do you vote?"

Benson shuffled and laughed shamefacedly. It was enough.

"Ah, exactly, señor," the young man pounced upon him. "Neither do I. Nor my friends. What use, they say, are our few votes against the unthinking thousands? And they say true. What use? Those of discernment, capable of judgment, are always outnumbered by the mass. And it is upon the dull-witted emotions of the many that the professionals ply their art. Consider this stupidity of Tacna-Arica.

"Is this desert of any value to Peru? Can Chile derive any benefit out of holding it? And yet all Peru growls and arrests strangers and throws them into local lock-ups while stupid officials make investigations lest they be Chilenos and the mob yelps without the gates. And go into any cheap drinking shop or third-class hotel, and what do you see scrawled upon the walls?

"*Se prohibe entrar, ni perros ni Peruanos!*

"Neither dogs nor Peruvians allowed! I tell you, señor, I, who have lived my life here, that is not a natural sentiment for Peruvians to hate Chilean, nor for both to despise Bolivian. Does it matter to the people of Peru one peso or to Chile the life of a single soldier which of them administers this desert? And yet they hate. Why? The answer again is very simple. Because there are jobs to be held by *politicos*. This, Señor Nord-Americano, is the condition in all countries where the witless herd has votes."

The young man stabbed his denunciation with a long forefinger against the other's chest and regained his breath steamily through his high-bridged beak. Benson felt that the question of political salvation had been put up to him. Yet all that he could contribute was:

"Well I don't know but what you may be right. But what are you going to do about it?"

"Ah!" the reformer breathed. "You put to me a question. A hundred remedies have been suggested by myself and by yourself and by the likes of us. But they all come down in the end to this: That we should each do our bit toward curbing the activities of those sleek professionals who care not who lives or who dies so long as they profit and grow fat. The question is—how shall each do our bit? For myself, señor, I have answered that question."

Benson sat suddenly upright. A man who had discovered a method of dealing with political ills was copy indeed.

"How?" he asked, almost with deference. His boredom had long ago vanished. Now he was all respectful interest.

The young man smiled with a certain tight-lipped elation, as if now that he had arrived at a decision a burden had been lifted from his soul.

"Señor," he announced, with so serious a conviction in his tone that Benson knew the decision was one that had been arrived at long since, after much thought, and would inexorably be carried out. "Señor, I am, like you, a political amateur. I can not join societies and be a canvasser of votes according to order. I am a man of action. My purpose is to deal with those fat criminals personally."

"How?" Benson did not feel a trace of ridicule at this distinctly large statement.

The young man shrugged with easy conviction.

"Once again, señor, the answer is simple. We deal with a class of men so immersed in self that moral persuasion is fruitless. Therefore my contribution toward reform will be to catch as many of these exploiters as I may, as opportunity occurs or I as I can make it, and I shall show them the error of their ways by the imposition of fine or castigation, as the case may best deserve."

The fantastic statement was made with such calm finality that Benson, instead of groaning out the pained ridicule with which the case-hardened reporter meets just one more crank, only breathed for the third time—

"How?"

The reformer of erring politicians threw out his hands, palms uppermost, and laughed in anticipation. He was startlingly direct.

"It is easy. I have friends, a few who think as I do and who are to be trusted. We are banded by oath to our cause. We know of places—" He broke off and pointed his great nose upward at a huge bird that sailed tremorless, like a high aeroplane, far above them— "Look! That is a king condor. He swoops from his fastness in the high mountains upon the fat white pelicans of the Chincha, the guano islands, and he eats their eggs. On account of his raids guano guards wait for him with rifles. But he is clever. You see he returns in safety. So we. We know of many places up in the mountains back there, all the way from Colombia in the north down to Valpo and beyond. We, too, can perhaps raid the nest eggs of some of these sleek fellows who persuade others to do their killing for them. It is sufficient. You understand, no?"

He rose and bowed like a hidalgo of old Spain.

"I tell you this, señor, because, firstly, you will not tell anybody—as yet; secondly, because if you did, nobody would believe you; and thirdly, because you are a newspaper man of North America, and when the time comes I do not wish to be misrepresented. And before you laugh, señor, and say to yourself, impossible, remember that we are not in your country with its nearly half a million police, nor yet in the more impossible farther north with its terribly few North West Mounted, but we are here, in South America. Señor, I wish you adieu. Remember me."

Benson was left not as hilariously incredulous as he felt that he ought to be. The man had talked like the wildest-eyed crank. And yet he was distinctly not a hare-brained visionary. He was young and seemed to be more than usually active, and he spoke with calm deliberation. So Benson found himself saying:

"Gee! A reformer with a practical kick to him! A bold-blooded, cold-blooded bandit of the mountains! An altruistic brigand!"

And then, as he remembered the man's burning eyes and strong nose and hard mouth, he added:

"Golly, I believe he'll do it. I'll keep my eyes on that bird. There's a front-page story in him or I'm a raw cub."

But the opportunity to keep an eye on the man did not come. Benson smoked his cigars in the plaza and loafed about the tiny town during the siesta hours of the afternoon; for he was sure that this urgent person did not indulge himself in three hours of midday sleep. But no tall young man with smoldering eyes was to be met. He made casual inquiries; for that potential headliner was noted in his memorandum book, and Benson was one of those who succeeded because

he kept news possibilities in mind. Reports were vague and conflicting.

"A tall *hombre curioso* with an enormous nose? Yes, meesterr, I know of whom you would speak. His name does not recall to me; but yes, I know. Recently returned from the *Collegio San Felipe* in Madrid. A fool, meesterr; a young revolutionary of ultra ideas. I do not know what has become of him; but ha ha, that is no loss to anybody."

This was from the Señor Alonço Gutierrez, a genial gentleman who was secretary of something to somebody or other and was hail-fellow-well-met with every member of the American commission. Benson found himself mistrusting this man.

"A lobbyist," he said to himself.

Señor Enrico Valdez, the governor of the town, reported differently.

"Ah, the young amateur toreador. A youth of good family; a Colombiano I think, or maybe from Argentina; I do not think he is Chileno; unless from down south somewhere where our accent is not so marked. His name? *Cral* Don Luis Something or other. But I know him. A great horseman and a phenomenal rifle shot. He should have been in the military; but what do you think? He remains a mere student, and of sociology at that. A little wild, that is to say very modern, but a good lad, a good lad."

Benson felt that the governor was an honest man.

"Bet he landed his job through family pull," he mused. "He's no politician."

But that seemed to be the end of the front-page story.

ARICA drifted into June and enjoyed its midwinter season—which was different from the fall in that the seals no longer disported themselves off shore and the guano birds no longer flew with the Humboldt current. Then happened an event which had no bearing upon anything at all. But Benson, being the keen journalist that he was, immediately tingled with alertness.

The Excellency Don Ignacio Sant Ilario, who was coming all the way from Antofagasta overland by rail via La Paz to confer with the American commission, did not arrive. Sundry officials went through the formality of dressing up in insufferably hot frock coats to meet the weekly train from La Paz, upon which the great man was expected. The train rolled in on due time—which meant any time during its due afternoon. But no Excellency.

Train officials, what did they know? Passengers got on at La Paz yesterday; passengers alighted at Arica today. The train was not a steamship with a passenger list. It was enough that they should see that nobody rode who had no ticket. Perhaps the passport officials on the border might have some record. Perhaps—it had happened before—some passenger had stepped off the train to take a walk during one of the long stops and had been left behind.

That was all the news of the day. Anxious telegrams to the border discovered that no Excellent passport had been checked. Laborious and roundabout cables, on the other hand, affirmed that the great man had left Antofagasta accompanied by his secretary and that if he had not arrived he must have missed the train and would be waiting over until next week in La Paz. The Chilean ambassador in La Paz replied in due time that such was not the case. *Sua Excellencia* had left on that train.

So Benson, while the local four-sheet *El Diario* featured the "Mysterious Disappearance of a Diplomat," murmured, "By golly, what a story, if I can only connect!" He sat himself assiduously to making inquiry in every last possible place in Arica for a young man with a large nose whose name he did not know. It astounded him how many men there were in Arica whose friends thought they had large noses, and what hen-pecked meekness was touted to him as forceful personality. Soon it began to be bruited abroad that the eccentric American was looking for a local man to furnish new stories for his paper.

Then Benson bought a copy of *El Diario*. Not because he wanted the sheet but in order to get rid of a most insistent urchin.

"But, *muchachito*, I don't want your miserable paper! It is torn and dirty, and besides, rogue without shame, it is two days old."

But the boy flashed back at him:

"What are two days here in Arica? And what are ten centavos to a Señor Nord-Americano? Buy, meesterr; it is my only one. Much luck will come to you by buying my last. All the news that you can wish to know is in this most excellent paper."

So Benson laughed and offered an American dime to the brat, who snatched at it grinning—every shop in Arica took American money these days—and flipped the front page over before delivering the paper.

"Look, señor, this side is clean," he giggled and vanished.

Benson grinned at the boy's brightness; and then his eye was caught by an enclosing circle drawn in charcoal around a short paragraph. It was nothing of interest. Merely a stray news item: it was reported that condors of peculiar ferocity were flocking in the neighborhood of the San Gregorio Pass.

That was all. But Benson pursed his lips and frowned into the distance with one raised eyebrow. Was there any meaning to all this? That boy was extraordinarily sharp and quite unnecessarily insistent. Was all of this just coincidence, this marked paper of a day old? Condors! There was a well-photographed picture in his memory—a dark, impassioned face pointing at a great condor sailing home to its mountain aerie after raiding the fat white pelicans of the Chincha Islands. And a personal simile had been drawn by his tall young man.

Benson stuffed the paper into his pocket and quickened his pace to the hotel. His nose for news was a byword in his office. What was more, he had that well-developed "hunch" for hidden news—an impulse to dig out what was under the surface of an apparently unimportant event—that so many star men acquire. He was having a hunch now.

For a while nobody could tell him anything about the San Gregorio Pass—so soon are things forgotten. And then some one recalled that, oh yes, the old mule trail, before the railroad came, went over the San Gregorio, and for that matter mule trains still used that road for a desultory freight that found the railing tariff too expensive.

For Benson that was enough. He went out and began to make inquiries for some *arriero* who could arrange to take him up to La Paz by the old mule trail.

"Oh, just for the experience of it," he told the astounded guests at the hotel who wanted to know whether he was suddenly crazy. "Things are pretty dull here just now; and I have a fancy I can get a story out of it perhaps."

An *arriero*, or mule contractor, who thought the gringo was quite *loco* was found without much trouble, since the gringo was willing to pay as much as a dollar American per day for a mule to ride upon and another dollar for a pack mule and yet a dollar for a mule for the *arriero* to ride upon, and a fourth dollar for a mule to carry fodder for the other mules to subsist upon during that climb of twenty miles a day over absolute desert.

During the climb Benson learned very thoroughly why the old-timers in the hotel had questioned his sanity. Twenty miles a day on mule back does not sound like any particularly serious travel; but Benson was constrained to quote with a certain grim humor as his good beast toiled up and ever up:

> Sometimes we goes where the roads are,
> but mostly we goes where they ain't;
> We'd climb up the side of a sign-board
> and trust to the stick of the paint.

Six such marches had to be accomplished before, at twelve thousand feet, from where one could look upward at an eye-straining emptiness of barren brown pinnacle towering above pinnacle and still

feel that one was only at the bottom, the *arriero* announced—

"This, señor, is the San Gregorio."

And there Benson was at a loss. He had come to the end of nowhere—and as for condors? Surely there were condors; one can see condors at any desolate point of the high Cordillera, great still-winged gliders going effortlessly nowhere. Enthralling things to contemplate in their vast ease and mastery of whirling air currents; but hardly head-line news material. Benson had played his hunch to the limit and here he was.

"Well," he said to the *arriero* with determination, "here we camp."

The *arriero* shrugged.

"*Buen, señor.* For how long?"

"I don't know," said Benson. "A day or two, or maybe a week."

"That," said the *arriero,* voicing an inexorable law, "is not possible. We have fodder and drink for three days—sufficient to reach La Paz. If we waste a day here we hunger on the third; if we waste two, we suffer; if we waste three, we die in this dryness."

It came to Benson with a qualm that the old-timers had meant more than he had ever realized when they demanded whether he were crazy. Suppose there had been an accident? A hitch of some sort; a slip at some precipitous part of the trail; anything that might have caused a delay? At the same time it blazed into his mind that it was the very food problem that rendered these mountains inaccessible, that a party—say of bandits—could they but make some provision for themselves, would be safe from any but the most desultory pursuit. Well, by golly, he swore, he would play his hunch to the last possible limit.

"All right, we'll camp here for a day," he told the *arriero.*

The latter shrugged, but there was a certain truculence underlying his unconcern.

"*Buen, señor.* A day we can afford. But tomorrow I and my mules move on. In my day I, too, have been young and have hunted foolishness for the fun of it, but nowadays the risk of my life and four mules is not to be compensated for by the good dollars that the señor pays."

Benson was alive to the challenge and his immediate impulse, of course, was to assert his free-born American dominance over—well, he did not know exactly what. But it rose hotly to his lips that this foreign, brown sort of person who wore no shoes and whom he was paying should take his orders without question.

"You'll stay just as long as I say," he growled, and followed his order with its natural accompaniment of a threatening half-step forward.

But the man remained disconcertingly unafraid, only his customary shrug of indifference was replaced by an expression of sulkiness and a humping of the shoulders as he stood his ground. And then the sudden realization drove into Benson's consciousness that an old-fashioned, though large, Colt's revolver fitted in so naturally with the other's picturesquely greasy costume of poncho and sombrero and rope sandals as to have remained almost unnoticed, while his own neat and new automatic was safely stowed somewhere in a saddle bag.

It is always something of a shock to the normally peaceful man of the cities when he finds himself in sudden and imminent contact with circumstances where the only enforcement of right is the other man's gun. Benson's hostile gesture was cut short in its very inception. He wasn't a fool.

And once again one of the arresting statements of that somber-eyed reformer came into his mind. He was not back home in well-policed North America where open gun-toting was a thing of the past, but in South America, many hundred miles from any sort of law and order. It also began to be borne in upon him with a surprizing sense of reality that this brown person who conducted a mule train so capably over a few hundred miles of absolute desert was a free-born citizen in his own country and that he, Benson, was the foreigner.

Only the vanity of a fool would have

insisted upon a continuation of the hostile demonstration. Benson shrugged in turn.

"Oh, all right," he grumbled. "I suppose you're right. We'll move on tomorrow."

"*Cierto*," leered the *arriero*, by no means averse to rubbing it in. "Quite surely. Tomorrow at the noon hour, and not an hour later, for, as for me, I get over the pass and into shelter before night."

Benson felt the very human urge to save his face by forcing a laugh.

"I suppose you're afraid of the fierce condors up here. As for me, I came to look for condors."

"*Como?*" What's that?" The man looked at Benson with a quick change of expression from surliness to puzzlement. "The señor says he came all this way to look for condors?"

"Sure!" said Benson. "Why else would I want to come here with your louse-ridden pack outfit rather than travel by train?"

' The señor does not wish to go to La Paz?"

Benson shook his head. The man scowled at him with a swift access of suspicion.

"Why?" he demanded bluntly.

Benson played his hunch.

"Because a friend of mine, Don Luis of Arica and many other places, who is conversant with the ways of condors, sent me a message to say that they were to be seen here."

"Oho, so?" the man muttered. "*En verdad, los condores*," and then—

"Why did the señor not tell me this in the beginning—that he was interested in the doings of condors?"

"What do you know about condors?" Benson suddenly challenged him.

The *arriero* was immediately close-mouthed.

"I, señor? Nothing. Nothing at all. Only—I, too, have heard that they are to be met with at this pass."

And with that he closed up more tightly than a clam and the most that all of Benson's questioning could get out of him was that condors existed but that he, a poor mule-packer, had no control over their comings and goings. They let themselves be seen when they so desired, not when he did. And he wrapped himself in his poncho and sat down with his back against the lee of a rock that served as a break for the thin wind that whistled down the pass.

So doggedly uncommunicative did the man remain that Benson gave up trying to make him talk. He felt sure now, from the man's attitude, that this wild hunch he had been following was no myth, that there was a meaning more than implied by the mere name of the great birds of the mountains. The mystery connected in some way with the volcanic young man of his front-page story, and it seemed that connection of any sort with that young man was sufficient to inspire respect.

He was convinced that, as he had guessed, the marked item in the greasy newspaper had been a definite lead. Why, then, was there no further clue here? There must be, he decided, and, of course, such a clue would not be set up by the roadside. There must be something round the nearest corner or up the next ravine. So he left the *arriero* to his poncho-wrapped silence and went off to discover whatever might be discoverable.

But the nearest corner behind the next outjutting crag was as bare and barren as was the trail—more so, because the débris of the trail side was lacking. And so was the next gully and the next ravine after that. And then Benson, star newspaper man, received the shock of finding himself in sudden and imminent contact with another crude condition of Andean passes. Though this was a condition by no means confined to the Cordillera. It was one which many people, not born mountaineers, have met with.

Benson found that every little gully and every mass of outjutting rock looked amazingly like every other one.

He had wandered for an hour or so, looking for, hoping for, something that his mind had not yet definitely fashioned

—a camp, perhaps, or a new trail, or a sign of some sort. He had discovered only emptiness. Then he had wandered, disappointed and puzzled, for an hour or so back and turned the last corner—and discovered only emptiness.

He caught at his breath and felt the emptiness in the pit of his stomach. He was sure that that bend was the last behind which the mules would be hidden; and yet—had that scar of landslide looked quite so new; or that farther peak so close? Or was it just the changing angle of the setting sun that was playing tricks with perspective? He couldn't be certain. His memory, trained to a fine point in observing and recording scenes of murders and railway wrecks and elections—scenes in which humanity figured in masses—was totally untrained in the sharp mental photography of rocks and sand and contours, the details of empty landscape.

A cold wind whistled down a long gash between high cliffs and chilled him. He shivered, and knew in the same instant that he was shivering mentally. He was not lost, he told himself—not as yet—and he was able to laugh at his sudden qualm, though the possibility was close enough to be disquieting. If a man should really lose himself in that desolate chaos of ridge and peak and scarp what would he do? The *arriero's* blunt statement had given the answer. On the second day he would suffer and on the third he would die in that dryness.

Clammy thought in the chill mountain evening. But, after all, it was nothing that had any bearing on his case. He couldn't be far from the camp. He could shout, and the *arriero* would come from just round the corner and laugh at him. Or, failing that, if a man would keep from getting panicky and running miles in circles, all he would have to do would be to sit tight through the night and the *arriero*, who knew mountains, could easily trail him in the morning.

Could—perhaps. That bare rock and shifting gravel left awfully little trail. A half regiment of men might almost lose themselves amongst those brown crags and not be trailed.

The muscles of Benson's throat suddenly gripped him like a hand. He coughed, and expelled a choked lungful of air in a quavering shout. Shouted again, hoarse calls that rose in thin futility through the empty vastness and came back in chuckling whispers. Then—good God, how hideously low the sun slanted down that long ravine—he began to run, to scramble crabwise up a long slope round the angle of which he knew the camp lay.

A desperately long slope it was, and the loose gravel that slid away in small avalanches from under each plunging footstep dragged at his calf muscles like weights. He reached the turn with bursting lungs and a stabbing pain in his side, and saw only emptiness.

He leaned—lurched rather—against a low shelf and gasped for breath with which to shout in vain hope again. But the wayward angel who watches over good reporters, and who had helped Benson out of more than one tight place before, had not lost sight of him even in this last corner of desolation. A shout impinged on Benson's drumming ears from behind him, from the direction in which he had just come.

Benson whirled as if the shout had been a shot. He felt that he could call that *arriero* brother. But it was as if the angel had sent a miracle out of the wilderness. The figure that dropped from crag to crag and leapt minor chasms like a goat flapped yellow in the fading light, whereas the *arriero's* poncho had been dirty brown, and this agile person seemed to wear a queer brindled cap with pendulous ear laps that made him look like a bloodhound.

In a space of remarkably few minutes, considering the ground he traversed, the miracle stood before Benson, breathing as easily as if he had trotted over a paved boulevard. A Quechua Indian youth it was, with the barrel chest and bunched calves of a people who die if fate forces them to live at any altitude less

than eight or nine thousand feet. He spoke an understandable Spanish.

"The señor's mules are over there," he pointed with his chin in a direction where Benson had been sure they were not.

The miracle continued to manifest itself. There they were when Benson panted round that corner, and a more surprizing circumstance was that they were alone. The *arriero* had disappeared, and his riding mule with him.

"He has gone back," said the Indian youth calmly. "See, he has taken fodder enough and food for the journey."

Benson felt curiously deserted, uncomfortably so. He had found his camp only to find that he was alone in the trackless desert.

"But—good Lord, but why?" he had to know. Why had the man so suddenly and silently deserted?

"He had no desire to see condors," the youth explained artlessly. "But what matter? He had no knowledge of their places. I will show the señor."

It was then that Benson was able to draw his first deep breath after his near panic. So it was all true then? He had guessed rightly about that newspaper lead, and here was the guide.

"Where? When?" he demanded.

The youth pointed a vague half-circle of horizon with his chin.

"*Lejito,*" he said; which was a term that Benson had already learned to mean anywhere between a mile and a hard day's march. "We must start now. See, the packs are loaded."

It was closing dusk and the peaks outlined against the western light loomed huge and impendingly close while the ravines dropped away into fathomless darkness. But Benson was full of confidence now. He was the alert star reporter once more. In the pursuit of a story he had taken many a chance far riskier than following an unknown guide over precipitous paths. He mounted his mule without hesitation.

"*Vamonos,*" he ordered.

The youth, without another word, herded the pack mules before him, prodded their tails with a stick and drove them into a dim ravine that looked like a street of down-town New York after business hours. Benson had had his lesson on the subject of unobservant wandering, and he set himself to focus his mind on landmarks. But that ravine melted into a dusky side gully and the gully into a bare mountain scarp. Desolation piled upon chaos until the dimness merged into the hazy, illusive twilight of high mountain places and every vast shadow was the exact counterpart of every other and only the mules and the tireless guide seemed to know where to set their feet.

Benson grinned to himself. He might have known it would be like this; he guessed that the start had been timed with purpose. This most courteous modern bandit adopted the simple plan of a night journey, relying shrewdly on a city dweller's inexperience rather than the good old, though less polite, expedient of blindfolding. Benson's grin, then, was one of appreciation of modern inventiveness as he fished a little radiolite watch compass from his pocket. He let the mule follow where the shuffling, clicking shadows ahead of him led and contented himself with keeping a record of general direction. The whole rest of his attention he devoted to keeping his seat upon a creature that up-ended front or rear with jolting suddenness as the trail which the rider could not see demanded.

Time crawled slower even than the mules, and Benson, while he was able to note direction, had no means of knowing how to judge mileage. He gave up trying to question the Indian lad, who did not answer out of the dimness ahead. Hours passed, long, comfortless hours, during which cold winds whistled against his cheeks down some high cleft or hot winds breathed softly upon him from up some other fathomless gash.

After many such hours the Indian called a halt in the middle of apparent nowhere and Benson was glad to stretch his thighs, which ached from holding on. The Indian sat with his back against a

rock, silent and uncommunicative, and seemed to sleep. Benson did his best to follow suit, and was just about adapting himself to the knobby discomfort of a gravel bank when the guide got up as if awakened by an alarm clock, yawned once, and poked the pack mule into another squealing, grunting start. After that Benson rode for he did not know how many hours again, till, with the breaking of dawn over peaks that looked exactly like those he had left, a barren gully debouched into a little valley where an unbelievable greenness was a relief against inclosing cliffs of dead gray lights and dull brown shadows. Real trees—skimpy and wind-blown, but things that grew. Among them nestled a straggly line of adobe huts.

For the first time in many hours the Indian opened his mouth .

"*Helos aquí los Condores,*" he announced. And with that, his task accomplished, he poked the pack mules with his stick into a fast jog and stood aside.

Benson rode forward alone, tingling with a sense of imminent discovery. Early as it was, figures moved about amongst the huts; a few Indians and *mestizos,* busy with the morning chores of fire-wood and water; and a few—Benson was surprized, almost disappointed—not picturesque ruffians decked out in all the finery of sombreros and embroidered ponchos and prominent weapons, but plain looking folk attired in the striped drill or panama suits of the coast towns. As Benson approached, one of them came forward, straw hat in hand.

"Ah, this must be the *Señor Americano,* no?" he inquired with an air of a genial hotel manager. "El Rey has been expecting you. Permit me to conduct you."

He held the mule's head while Benson dismounted. An Indian was already hurrying forward.

"Convey the señor's baggage to his room and see that the animals are fed," he ordered, and to Benson he added, "Do me the favor to accompany me."

He led the way to one of the adobe huts, knocked as a matter of perfunctory politeness and entered without waiting for a reply. The interior of the hut was bare to the point of discomfort. A crude table, a couple of chairs, blank mud walls and an ill-fitted window. From behind a mud partition came a voice, the resonant tone of which had remained so clearly in Benson's memory.

"Is that Ramon? He has arrived? *Bien hecho!*"

And with the words the young man of the plaza hurried through the doorless opening with both hands outstretched.

"Ah, señor, you rejoice me," he greeted. "I had expected you, but was not sure. Accept my compliments upon your cleverness. We have to be careful, you see, and that message of the paper was the most that I dared to send. Yet, as I said to friend Ramon here, 'For a newspaper man of North America it is sufficient'." He clapped his hands. He seemed to be full of high spirits and enthusiasm. "You will honor me by taking breakfast with me, señor, no? And you will excuse, I am sure, the rough accommodations of what is but a very temporary encampment."

Benson was full of questions. What, how, why? The miraculously timed guide, the yet more miraculous oasis in the desert of rainless mountains, the reason of it all?

El Rey threw out his hands and snored a chuckle through his great beak.

"But all these are trifles, señor," he deprecated. "Information is not difficult when one has friends. Our camp here, as I have already told you, is but one of many places known to us in the mountains where water is available. As to why, I have told you that too. It is all very simple. But let us eat, and I can perhaps make things clearer to you."

"*Pronto!*" he shouted, and an Indian *mozo* who seemed to have been awaiting the call outside the door hurried in with a basket-tray containing a jug of strong black coffee and a plate of tiny rolls, the universal early meal of South America, which is strung out to an hour or more with cigarets and gossip. Between sips

and smoke the host supplied such scraps of information as seemed to be necessary.

"What is there to explain, señor? I have already told you all. I have but done what I said. You may write me perhaps as one who has carried into maturity the universal boyhood adventure of playing at bandits, though with age, of course, comes more serious purpose. We are a group of men who have the courage of their opinions. We have formed a society with the aim of remedying in our small way the political ills of our country, or perhaps one might say, of our respective countries. We are few just now, but we shall grow, for—" his deep eyes took sudden fire and the need of declamatory gesture overruled his studied calm—"there are true patriots enough; men of convictions and courage and self-sacrifice who need only to be stirred to action. They need only a beginning. They may not all approve of our methods, but what matter? They will form other societies. What we do is admittedly spectacular, but I do not need to tell you, a newspaper man, that the dormant public spirit can be aroused to protest only by being focussed upon some example that arrests the attention. We lead in our way. They will follow in their own various ways."

Benson was impressed by the simple logic of the enthusiast. He nodded and breathed deeply. Here was his front page story working out all by itself.

"That means that you've got the missing excellency all right, I suppose."

The extraordinary fact of finding himself in intimate contact with actually operating altruistic brigandage and kidnapping did not seem to him nearly as unreal as it should. The young man was so logical, so obviously sincere and withal so well balanced that he positively forced the impression of a cool leader embarking upon a definite and well-organized campaign of political reform.

Benson's thoughts flew off at a tangent to review some of the blatant yelp and hurrah and—yes, the sub-surface illegality—of some of the political campaigns he had covered. From that, the association of ideas carried him back to the open defiance of law of this amazing campaign. And then the wild craziness of the whole thing swept over him in a wave.

"But, good lord," he burst forth. "You can't go on like this. You might do it once and get away with it, but then what? You can't live in a hole in the mountains all your life. You are an educated man, your friends seem to be the same, you've grown up in all the refinements and luxuries of cities. This Robin Hood stuff is all blah in this super-civilized century. People like yourselves, of modern culture, just can't exist hunted interminably from one lair to another. We have petty outbreaks of hold-up men taking to the mountains now and then; but they're always local hill-billies, people of few requirements and less intelligence and—and that's why they always get caught, I suppose."

The altruist snorted through his beak again and made the open gesture with his hands.

"But, señor, you disappoint me, while you compliment us with possession of intelligence," he grieved. "People like ourselves do not function so crudely. Consider. A prisoner has been taken. In this particular case, lured with the utmost simplicity from the train by a woman at dusk and pounced upon by masked men; his secretary with him. He is kept under guard; he deals only with masks worn by men who have intelligence enough not to make any false steps. When he has been duly disciplined and been released whom shall he accuse? Assume that his sense of direction is superhuman and he leads a regiment to capture the ferocious bandits—what will he find? A few empty huts. For we, having accomplished our coup, return each to his private affairs and await the word that calls us together again."

Benson looked almost convinced. The logical bandit hastened to establish his point.

"It is not so impossible, señor, yes? Consider again. In your own country the similar plan of a secret society with an

avowed intention of reform flourishes today, even though it attacks whole races and creeds. It throve amazingly until the ignorant and the self-seeking swarmed in and it became itself an organization of political ambition too enormously unwieldy to withstand the many enemies it had made.

"Not so we. We are well chosen and few. We attack here and there an individual—who has enemies enough of his own, I assure you. Having attacked, we do not seek profitable office. We vanish. We are not personalities—we are only a name. *La Sociedad*—" again the fire of enthusiasm lighted his face and the strong nose cartilages stood out white against the dark ground—"*La Sociedad de los Condores!* A name, believe me, señor, that will become one of terror to the exploiters of our people."

"By golly," Benson was convinced. "I believe you can do it for a while—and then, as you say, you may have started something. But—" he . placed his finger upon a weak spot—"tell me this, *El Rey*, Mister so careful, King of the Condors. Why do you let *me* see your most unforgettable face and tell me your plans?"

The chief shrugged without a trace of anxiety.

"Señor, I have already told you, in the plaza at Arica. It is so simple. Because I rely upon my judgment of men. You will report our doings with truth and with sympathy; you will give us, in short, the publicity that is necessary to arouse the public interest; and you will speak of me, not by name, but as *El Rey*, the King Condor—a title, you will note, which has the merit of attracting the attention of the mass. Furthermore—forgive me the personality—you North Americans are all so nationally complacent even when abroad. But consider the parallel. Suppose a foreigner in your country were to rise up and denounce a scion of one of your leading families as a brigand. You laugh yourself."

Benson had to admit the soundness of the other's argument. But there remained difficulties galore.

"What are you going to do with the excellency?" he asked. "And what is his connection with this Arica mess?"

The chief shrugged all the way up to his ears.

"That I can not say. Enough that he was bound thither."

Benson was almost shocked.

"Do you mean to tell me that you've just grabbed this fellow on the chance that he might pull off something?"

"Tcha-tcha!" The chief made a deprecating noise. "Do not be so hasty to misunderstand, señor. I—we—are not so full of conceit that we think we can settle that affair; it has grown too big for us in our present state of organization. We aim rather, as I have already said, to discipline these sleek ones as opportunity may serve. In this case, the present journey was our opportunity

"We captured our game; and I could recite to you causes enough out of this complacent excellency's past record. He has grown rich out of his many dealings with one moneyed interest or another. Out of his wealth he has built a god for himself and has sacrificed even his associates, to say nothing of poor devils who stood in his way, in order to add to his hoard. In his case, therefore, the Council of Condors has decided that the discipline shall take the form of a fine. Not very much; a sum equivalent to fifty thousand dollars; yet sufficient to hurt this miser to his very marrow, and sufficient—since our society, as individuals, are not rich—to replenish our war chest."

Benson threw up his hands.

"There's the fly in your ointment! It comes down to just this; that you aim to collect a ransom. You can't do it. A thousand people have tried that game, and it falls down every time. 'Cause why? Assuming that you can figure out some scheme of taking delivery of the money with mutual safety—and that takes some figuring, let me tell you—you can't force your man to write an order for money unless you can put the fear of death into him or unless you torture him."

Again the ears disappeared between the high shoulders.

"As to taking delivery, señor; you must not confuse our conditions here with your North America, criss-crossed by railways and telegraphs. In the Cordillera here it is all so simple. His appointed agent comes to an appointed place with a pack mule of currency, alone, or with ten men. What do we care? And as to putting the necessary fear into him—" the deprecatory hands flew out—"for the sake of the cause it may become necessary to take harsh measures."

Benson sat with wide eyes. This was a new angle; and it seemed to him, as he looked at that determined face with the light of near-fanaticism on it, that this man who was prepared to sacrifice so much and to risk so much for the sake of his convictions might very well sacrifice another individual for the good of the many. Of just such stuff are martyrs and reformers made.

"Golly!" he murmured. "Golly, but you—I mean, your sort of crowd—you can't do that."

The zealot reassured him.

"We trust not, señor. We surely trust not. For the present, in these modern days, we try psychology. My study in the colleges of Europe was, first, medicine; from which I gravitated naturally to the therapeutics of the mind; and thus to an ambition to heal the troubles of the herd who have no minds. We deal here with a gross character, cunning and clever beyond a doubt. But one attacks weakness, not strength. The fellow is cold and selfish as well as cruel, therefore ready to believe callousness in others. You shall see for yourself, señor. It is, in fact, time. The gentleman will have breakfasted; it is time for an interview."

He flicked the butt of his dozenth cigaret through the window with expert precision and retired into the rear room. In less than a minute he reappeared, transformed. He was the brigand of popular imagination. A wide, flat-brimmed Stetson hat was stuck at a low angle over one eye. A voluminous black poncho with a double stripe of white border enfolded his shoulders, its points hanging like a forked tail behind his knees. A black silk mask hid the upper half of his face and it seemed that his eyes actually glittered evilly through the slits. He laughed at Benson's astonishment and stuck a fresh cigaret into the extreme angle of his mouth.

"The stage effects, señor. They are always of invaluable assistance in creating an impression. Come!"

Benson followed, his mind in an uncertain haze of conflicting impressions. He could not decide just how he should write up this extraordinary man. One characteristic stood out; he was undoubtedly possessed of a keen analytical and deductive intelligence. In working out his fantastic ideas he dissected the reactions of the human animal in conditions parallel to the present in past history; and from these expressed motive forces and nerve cords he planned his own cool course. In this respect he seemed to be most unusually safe and sane.

But for the rest! Benson looked at the theatrical figure that strode so jauntily at his side and wondered. Was this man's judgment going to remain as well balanced as his plans? Or was he not likely to be carried away by his obvious love of the melodramatic? Was he as shrewd a reader of men's minds as he plumed himself on being, or was his modern psychology at fault?

Benson soon had an opportunity to judge. At the door of a hut where two other stage villains waited the chief stopped. To Benson he said:

"Señor, for your own future protection I beg that you will submit to play the passive part of another prisoner. You will thus avoid later any unpleasant accusation of complicity and—" he clapped his hands with a true actor's zest for drama—"you will be of undoubted assistance to me. Now then."

He composed himself for a fitting entrance, folded his arms within his poncho, adjusted his cigaret and kicked the door

open with a slam. The other two ruffians tramped in after him with Benson between them. Benson was full of interest to see the personage who had been so rudely snatched out of his security and ease and lodged he could hardly know where in the hands of bandits. A glance was sufficient to show that the man, though stubborn, was frightened.

He was the very antithesis of the cartoon politician. A smallish, stoutish, swarthy person who might have been a successful shopkeeper, except that his hands were soft and fat and offensively loaded with rings. Some of the stones were apparently worth considerable money. Benson sensed a master stroke of psychology in the plotters' leaving these scrupulously alone. He could see from the pouches under the man's eyes that his captivity was bearing heavily upon him.

The psychologist in action was equally clever. He paused once in the doorway as though to take in every detail of the room with an all-embracing suspicious glance, then strode forward and perched himself on a tall stool in the dimmest corner of the room. Benson felt that it had been placed there for just that purpose. On it the chief brooded for a while, silent, motionless; and it suddenly flashed upon Benson that, perched up there, with his black poncho draped in somber folds round him, points hanging to the ground, borders giving transverse slashes of white and with the contour of the great beak showing strongly under the mask, he positively forced the impression of a king condor upon its aerie, powerful, sinister and ruthless.

El Rey spoke. Gone was the suave politeness of his habit. His voice was in keeping with his appearance—cold, merciless.

"Señor, the time has come for a decision. We have been patient for many days. Now other affairs claim our attention." The direction of his beak indicated Benson. "We give you until noon of today to write the order."

The rich man's face twitched under the struggle of his emotions. To sign away fifty thousand dollars of his extortions nearly killed him, but he indicated the undermining of his stubbornness by asking the inevitable question, the universal difficulty in the way of all ransoms.

"If I sign for so large a sum how am I to know that the bankers of La Paz will agree to my identity, that they won't consider the note a forgery? If they do agree and deliver, how am I to know that you will then let me go free?"

The answer was ominously short, without compromise.

"You have no means of knowing. As to identity, it is our affair to persuade the bankers that your note is no forgery. As to releasing you, it is our affair to collect the money and then to let you go. And, Señor Politico, it is our very particular affair to prove to you that we mean business. You have until noon of today. At that time we shall present to you the first of the proofs that we have promised. Sign, and you will enjoy the same liberty as the Señor Americano."

He pronounced the veiled threat of his ultimatum with his masked face thrust menacingly forward from between hunched shoulders, breathing heavily, almost hissing, through his nose. Then he stepped slowly from the high stool with a rustle of the stiff poncho as of feathers and stalked from the room.

Outside, he clapped hands together between his knees and chuckled. He turned to Benson triumphantly.

"You see? You noted his weakness? He will sign. This afternoon he will sign, if not before. And it is your presence, señor, as another prisoner that will be of material assistance to me in this matter, for which I shall remain indebted to you, an indebtedness that I shall have much pleasure in repaying."

Benson, too, felt that the man's nerve would eventually break; but he was not so sanguine that it would do so that very day.

"What's this proof thing that you threatened him with?" he wanted to know.

"Ah, the proof!" It seemed to Benson that a trace of cold determination was apparent through the chief's geniality. "Let us hope that we do not have to furnish the proof. But he will sign. Never fear, he will sign. In the meanwhile, señor, the freedom of our poor camp is yours. A *mozo* has been appointed to your room. Your wishes are his commands. You will excuse me for my many duties, yes?"

Benson was left to himself to wander as he pleased. But where was he to go? The little encampment was no more than a huddle of adobe huts in a tiny valley hemmed in by ragged cliffs; no different from any new-born oasis settlement. A few poncho-clad Indians attended to chores; a few plain looking gentlemen lounged in doorways; a few mules grazed quietly at the mouth of the entering ravine where the spring that made the whole possible bubbled through a fault in the limestone.

There was nothing to do; nothing unusual to inspect. Benson remembered that he was tired from his long march of the day before and his interminable night ride. He stretched stiffly and betook himself to his hut to sleep.

It was past noon when he awoke, comfortably hungry, and, American-wise, instead of clapping his hands and shouting for a *mozo*, he went out to see what might be doing. Almost the first person he ran into was the Excellency—free and unattended. So the psychology had worked. He had signed!

The man almost ran into his arms, as to a friend and ally in misfortune. He was trembling and his swarthy complexion was gray with fear.

"Yes, yes," he mumbled to Benson's unasked question, waving his fat hands weakly. "I signed. I—it was horrible—they are fiends from the lowest pit—I signed for all that they demanded."

Benson was astonished. He had expected no such breakdown. Unless—what was that last card that the master psychologist had been holding so mysteriously?

"You signed, señor, before noon or—"

The man clung to his arm.

"After, *amigo*, after. I did not believe; I held out. *Santos*, fifty thousand dollars! But—devils! You were wise, my friend, to accede to their demands before they went to their horrible extremities."

"But for the lord's sake," Benson exploded. "What did they do? What was this proof of their determination that's got you so wrought up?"

"Ah, you do not know?" the man chattered. "Such a brutality! Such savagery! An ear! The ear of my poor secretary. They have been torturing him for days to force him to reveal my credits and the names of my bankers in order that they might make their hellish arrangements with swiftness and certitude. His ear, rather than my own, because, as they laughed in their brutality, an undamaged excellency was worth more than a damaged one. The next was to be mine. Oh, barbarians!"

Benson was incredulous. This most hospitable and courteous chief of kidnappers, zealot though he was, could never bring himself to such extremes. He was a man of European college culture, of education and refinement; he would by no stretch of imagination descend to physical torture.

"But señor, it is there," the man yammered. "Came noon, and a ruffian came to demand whether I had written all instructions as dictated and signed my name. Upon my cursing him, he withdrew without a word; and then on a plate they delivered it, newly severed, with the earring still in its ragged lobe. *Santissimas!* I wrote and signed. Who would not? Believe me or no, the thing is there yet."

He dragged at Benson's arm, and the latter let himself be led, still half-incredulous, half-convinced by the man's scared sincerity, automatically, out of his long reporting experience, steeling his mind to an inspection of horror.

And it was there, on the crude table upon a plate. An ear that had once been

light brown, now faded to a ghastly grayness of bloodless flesh, and the tiny jewel in its ring glowed as red as the clotted crimson on the plate.

Benson had seen nastiness before; he had reported scores of disasters. But he had never developed the callousness of a hospital intern to lacerated flesh. He stood in the doorway and gagged at the gruesome thing. He had seen many nastier sights; but this one filled him with a particular nausea; probably on account of its close association to himself and because of the sudden upset of all his preconceived opinions.

He still scarcely believed that this particularly engaging young man whom he had grown to like would have done this thing; his mind groped feebly for some other explanation. And yet, there the thing was—a ghastly clotted-crimson fact. His mind went back to an earlier thought. To a fanatic who would sacrifice his own all for a cause an ear of a single individual for the good of the many was but a paltry offering.

"Lord," he groaned. "Good lord, I might 'a' known it. They're all a bit wrong somewhere, every one of 'em. If he wasn't a nut like all the rest he'd never have started this bandit stuff!"

He left the wretched *politico* to his own terrors and went back to his hut. He needed to think. What was his own course to be? If this side of the superardent reformer was as remorseless as it seemed to be, what was his own, Benson's, attitude in the matter? Could he be cordial, or even friendly on the surface? Could he eat with the man and preserve the oridinary civilities? And with that came the disquieting consideration of whether it would be politic to give open offense to such a man. The question was too complex to decide off-hand. Benson settled it by remaining in his mud-walled room and shouting to the *mozo* to bring food.

It was not till the next morning that he emerged. His mind was made up. He would tell this misdirected reformer that, while he was in sympathy with his aims, he could not countenance some of his methods; and he would ask for a guide and would withdraw. And if there should be any demur about that, he would go without a guide. His pack saddles with all his privisions stood in a corner of his room, his mules grazed with the others at the head of the ravine; he knew the general compass direction, and, while he might go far astray, he could not miss the old trail which was a wide swath of the débris and litter and scraps of fodder left by the mule trains of three hundred years and never washed away by rain. He had no misgivings that any effort would be made to stop him.

Once again the first person to meet him was the pallid excellency. He seemed to have been waiting.

"*Amigo*," he quavered. "Companion of my misfortune, there is dire news. They do not mean ever to let us go."

"Oh, rubbish!" Benson snorted. This much he would not believe.

"But it is most desperately true," the man insisted. "I have heard them talking. Why should they let us go to bear witness against them—even though they all wear masks?"

Benson noticed then that the unassuming gentlemen loungers of the day before were now brigands of ferocious aspect. He had to smile. This, after the man had signed whatever had been required of him, was carrying psychology to a fine point of artistry.

"But it is not a matter to smile," the other moaned. "At least, not for me. For you, perhaps it may be different; you are of North America, and all the world remembers the message about that other *ladrone*, Raisuli. But I—may the good God protect me—I am lost. If I but knew the way and if it would not be for sentries who would shoot I would risk all on an escape. One might steal a mule at night. *Dios*, what a risk! But better that than torture."

Benson saw that the man was building panic for himself and tried to reassure him.

"You are frightening yourself needlessly, Excellency. These people are

cranks and fanatics; but—" he remembered that gruesome thing on the plate and finished lamely—"but they are not as bad you think."

"But, señor," the man shook him in his distress. "You do not know. I have been here for God knows how many days. I have seen—or at all events, I have heard —my unfortunate secretary! I—"

"Rubbish!" Benson growled again; though with not quite so much assurance as before. "Calm yourself. That kind of thing doesn't happen nowadays. Let's go and eat breakfast and then I'll see this King Condor and talk to him."

Which was what he did. *El Rey* was distressingly cordial.

"Ah, señor, permit me to wish you the best of this good morning. I trust you are finding your stay with us to be interesting. Your comfort is well looked after? I am desolate that my so many duties have not allowed me to devote more of my time to your entertainment."

He was quick to note the constraint of Benson's attitude and as quick to divine the reason.

"You have been talking to that fat little *politico* and you do not approve, yes?"

Benson found it difficult to stand by his guns in the face of so much friendliness but he managed to murmur something about "Civilized people— Some of your methods— Medieval barbarism—" and so forth.

El Rey's shrug and its accompanying smile were as ingenuous as the apology of an innocent child.

"But señor, you are so hasty to judge according to the standards of North America, which are so irrational. Consider, I beg of you. Am I misinformed in my belief that some of your proudest families retain, er—souvenirs—of negroes who have been burned at the stake? Well, does it make so much difference whether a man be black or—yellow? Again, is it an unknown occurrence that certain of your most righteous communities rise in wrath and apply tar and feathers to some woman on account of some trifling immorality? Is that so very much less painful than some of our regrettable harsh measures that must be applied in order that our cause may triumph?"

The chief's logic, as always, was disconcertingly unanswerable. All that Benson could do was to stick by his repeated last defense of that much overworked phrase, decent people. *El Rey* remained the soul of courteous patience.

"It surprizes and grieves me, señor," he maintained, "that you do not understand the principle of the good of the many. I shall take pleasure in discussing this principle with you at length and I have no doubt of convincing, if not converting, you. But that pleasure must be postponed; I am sure you will excuse me. A serious matter claims my attention just now. My men await me. An unfortunate affair of a man who has attempted to betray us—the most serious of menaces to an organization like ours. Permit me, señor, to excuse myself."

Benson was left to his own comments upon that agile mind. The man was impossible to corner. Arguments based upon mere civilized sentiment he turned back upon themselves with an adroitness that was unanswerable.

Benson found the flaccid prisoner all a-twitter again with apprehension. Like a rat in a cage, he had been scurrying, snooping, prying into every nook and corner in an agony of anxiety.

"*Amigo*, something is going on," he half whispered. "I do not know what; but that whole encampment is preparing for some event."

Benson guessed that the excitement was about the traitor and said so.

"*Celestes!* They will torture him—" the other gasped.

"Rubbish!" was Benson's reassurance, and he was elaborating upon that when a scream sounded from behind the line of huts.

Benson had heard screams like that before, screams of men who had been in frightful accidents. His words were cut short between suddenly clenching teeth

while pictures of all the horrors that he had ever witnessed raced past his mind in a dizzy cinema succession of flashes. His next conscious impression was that he was swearing at his companion for a fool and bidding him gruffly to let go of a frenzied grip upon his arm. Without any definite idea of what he was going to do, he started running in the direction of the scream; and vaguely, as he ran, he heard the *politico* panting and wailing behind him:

"No, no! I can not look! I can not bear to witness it!"

Yet he followed.

Benson plunged round the angle of a hut, and all at once, with the photographic clearness of reportorial observation, he took in the salient points of the hideous spectacle.

The Condors, apparently all of them, in all their theatrical trappings, stood in an irregular half circle before an adobe wall. At the central point of the semicircle, perched again upon a high stool like a great bird of evil, was the chief, thrusting his neck and beak forward in merciless judgment upon a man. The man hung from a beam that protruded from the side of the wall, belly down, back bent like a bow; at first appearance as if performing a gymnastic feat, clasping the beam with hands and feet. And then it became apparent that spikes or some such thing pinned his extremities in that position. His face, as Benson dashed round the corner, jerked up to a level with Benson's own, facing him with distorted eyeballs, and he screamed horribly again.

Benson heard the scream echoed at his shoulder by the nearly fainting excellency, and then a rifle muzzle was thrust into his stomach and they were both hustled round the corner as fast as they had come.

The whole episode, from the hearing of that first scream to their swift ejection, had been as sudden as a strip from one of those realistically nasty European films had crept by the censor and flared out in all its stark beastliness into the middle of an otherwise innocuous farce melodrama. But it stayed before Benson's eyes like some trick of persistence of vision. The excellency was wringing his hands and moaning.

"*Valgame Dios!* Savages! What did I tell you? The same fate is reserved for us! I must escape! *To'os Santos*, I will take any risk! I will get away or die swiftly by bullet!"

Benson's mind was already made up. No need to review the pros and cons. His pride of country forbade that he should feel any such fears on his own account; but as for the other, he had seen enough. Fanatics so implacable would be capable of anything. He steadied his companion by a firm grip of the upper arm.

"Get a hold of yourself," he encouraged. "I'm with you in this escape. I know the compass direction, so it'll hinge only upon our getaway."

The other clutched at him as at a straw in a whirlpool.

"You will, señor? You will help me? *Gracia' dios*, then we succeed! And—listen, *amigo*, I will confess to you! Come first away, far from the houses. Listen. Upon seeing you a prisoner yesterday I already harbored some wild thought of escape, for I know the ingenuity and capability of you North Americans; and I— I am an opportunist, *amigo*. In my official position we must often gamble upon what we hope to bring about. I gambled on a long chance, and—you shall share, *amigo!* As my deliverer, you shall not be forgotten."

The man was becoming incoherent and in his terror was the old familiar ring of the demagogue promising rewards. Benson shook him to get the chattering out of him and to extract the gist of what he was trying to say.

In the course of much needless repetition and pinning down to facts it devolved that the opportunist, gambling, as he said, on every thin thread of possibility, had played for as much time as he had dared. He had insisted that it would take at least two days to collect

the ransom money; whereas he knew perfectly well that, his identity established, the rescue money would be forthcoming immediately. Instructions were as ridiculously simple as the chief had told Benson. A messenger, or messengers, with a pack mule of currency was to proceed along the old trail to a place called Quimsa Tambo where there was a mud rest-house built by some devout wayfarer. The bandits took it cheerfully upon themselves to establish the identity of the excellency's note to the bank and to determine whether an ambush were planted with the money or no. If so, there would be nobody to collect; if not, the bandit collectors would appear.

It was a plan perfectly feasible when the conviction had once been forced upon the prisoner that he had no voice whatsoever in the making of terms and that his only guarantee of freedom was the word of his captors. Well, then, the astute statesman explained to Benson, the distance to the bank at La Paz was, so the brigands had said, one full day's journey after striking the trail; a full day also back to this Tambo place. The brigands would not be expecting any action on the money for at least two days longer than the journey time; therefore, since he had signed his order yesterday afternoon, if they could escape before the two days, they would meet the messenger at—

Benson interrupted the excited stream of chatter bruskly.

"I don't know about your money," he shut him up, "and I don't care a ——! Whether you save it or lose it is your affair. If I can help you save your skin, I'm satisfied. And the sooner we get out of here the better."

"Yes, yes, the sooner, so much the better!" The opportunist was desperately eager to snatch at the first possible opportunity, and so relieved to find that the half of his wealth would not be extorted from him for the American's help that he overlooked the manner of the refusal. "Tonight, *amigo mio.* Why not this very night? Look, those mules. Let us at least go over to the ravine and look things over while they are busy with their hellish business."

Benson's thoughts reverted to the wretched man who hung from the beam; but there at the corner of the hut where the tribunal was taking place stood a man with a rifle; nor had the prisoner screamed again. Probably he had given in to whatever demands had been made. Of course, Benson could not have done anything anyhow; yet he was thoroughly imbued with the convention of the bounden duty of decent people in the circumstances. With a reluctant conscience he accompanied the eager diplomat over the short half mile to the ravine head, holding him back by the arm to keep his pace down to an unsuspicious stroll. Nobody interfered. Nobody, apparently, was in charge of the mules. No need; for why should they stray away from feed into the desert? Nobody seemed to be guarding the pass; and again the obvious answer was, no need. Without doubt there were sentries posted at lookout places high above to warn against approaching danger; but from within, what danger could come? It really seemed that these modern brigands, knowing the caliber of their prisoner, counted upon sheer ignorance of direction and fear of the desert as a deterrent to escape. Benson smiled grimly as he thought of the modern convenience of his radiolite compass.

"Tonight let it be, brother," he determined. "If you can carry two plain riding saddles, I can carry one of my pack saddles with plenty grub enough and water canteens for a day's run. The mules will have to go hungry; but they're well fed up on that good grass and they can stand it."

They returned and spent the afternoon as unobtrusively as they could. It was to be expected that they should keep themselves to their respective rooms after what they had seen that morning, though Benson had to threaten the diplomat with abandonment of the project if he would not restrain himself from skipping over at intervals of half an hour in an agony of

anxiety about some simple preparation or some futile idea.

Darkness duly dragged its way along. Benson chewed upon his patience for at least another hour. In the encampment there was no light other than feeble storm lanterns, and most folk would have retired by now. People still came and went between the huts! So much the better, he thought. Attention would not be attracted to a little extra noise. He waited at the crack of his open door till his opportunity came. Then he silently heaved up his pack saddle and stepped out into the night. Nothing stirred.

Fifty yards away, where nobody would be likely to stumble upon it, he set the saddle down and then went boldly back to the diplomat's hut. That one would have rushed forth at once; but Benson restrained him.

"Don't ask too much of good luck all at once," he growled. "We'll need enough of it later; for the present, we have time."

After some fifteen minutes of waiting in tingling tenseness there seemed to occur another lull in the comings and goings outside. Benson lifted one of the saddles and went out. The diplomat followed. Luck held—extraordinary luck. Their dark clothing soon merged into the dimness and their footsteps melted into the dark without any alarm being given.

After that it was only a matter of catching and saddling the necessary mules without too much of a clatter. Benson, with staunch Americanism, had often jeered at that queer pack saddle contraption. Now he blessed it fervently. It was a V-shaped thing of stout slats with rawhide thongs stapled into every possible position in such a manner that the pack could be made up on the floor and then hoisted by two men on to a mule's back. Benson had packed it as light as he had dared; yet he cursed it as fervently as he had blessed it before that half mile out to the ravine was covered.

At that distance there was no very great danger that any noise would attract attention back among the huts unless evil fate should cause a stampede. But luck stayed with them. Those mules, *arriero*-trained, had been well beaten more than a few times for giving trouble over saddling. Docilely enough three of them permitted themselves to be caught. In ten more minutes they were picking their way quietly up the ravine. It had all been ridiculously easy. Benson sighed in relief,

"The success that rewards boldness," he quoted the platitude to himself, and capped it with another, "The simple hole that the best of crooks leave in their plans." To his companion he whispered:

"Now then, sentries are our only danger. But I hope they'll be perched high up somewhere from where they can watch what's coming rather than what's going. But if anybody challenges, keep your wits and you do the talking. Be tough. Tell him to go to —— or to go back to sleep or something. And don't try to force your mule; let him pick his own road. I'll keep a watch on general direction."

And in that manner they rode. An hour passed without challenge. Another hour. It was almost too easy. The only explanation, of course, was that these civilized, city-bred bandits never gave a thought to the possibility that city-bred prisoners would dare to attempt an escape into the empty desert. The mules, good beasts, once started seemed to know their road. Through one ravine they wound, into another, up the flank of a long scarp, down a steep slant, up another gully, and so on, plodding slowly and surely in the direction that Benson's compass said was right.

The hours slid steadily into one another. To Benson it seemed that they climbed more than he remembered having come down and that they traveled more aching hours than his guide had brought him without a rest. The diplomat groaned behind him.

He twisted and ached in his own saddle and debated with himself the advisability of tempting Providence after their extraordinary run of good luck by giving way to weariness and stopping for just

ten minutes of stretch and rest. Kept debating for weary hours, and kept deciding grimly to go on. And then, before he expected it, there came Heaven-sent recompense. He realized suddenly that the mules had turned into another direction and were plodding stolidly along the old trail. In the starlight dimness he could recognize the beaten path of age-old refuse.

"Golly!" he pulled up suddenly. "Now which way?"

There was the trail. But he had no means of telling where he had come out on that trail. Only one thing was sure. Upward would be the beginning of the high plain in a hollow of which was hidden the city of La Paz. But the diplomat wailed frantic protest.

"But *amigo,* how do we know whether Quimsa Tambo be before us or behind?"

"What do we care?" grunted Benson. "Before us is La Paz City."

He reined up to let the other pass him and kicked at that mule's dim flank to speed it up to the front, where he kept it ruthlessly, despite the rich man's moans for Quimsa Tambo and his money.

The chill mountain dawn began to wash out the night shadows long before any sun would show over the eastern peaks. Then, with the first graying of things, a voice overtook them. The diplomat squealed and Benson's throat tightened.

But the voice seemed to be alone and singing lustily. It faded and swelled again and died down as it wound in and out of the bends behind them. At last some one came into view and halloed.

"*Buen' dias,* señores who travel so early. *Carramba,* I thought I was an early wayfarer; but you have ambition these cold mornings."

Benson's throat relaxed. But for his companion there was only one anxiety.

"Which direction is Quimsa Tambo?" he croaked. "Before or behind?"

"Before you, *compadre;* before you, surely. You can not pass *that* in the night and not know it. *Lejitito,* but a very little distance. Keep going! I follow. It is there that I myself propose to take the little coffee."

The cheerful traveler loomed bulkily in the morning mist and, like all travelers of the Cordillera trails, was content to remain in the rear. The diplomat supplied him readily enough with a circumstantial story.

"*Miravel!*" he wondered. "How it is curious that so many different businesses travel the same road! As for myself, my business is to meet some men at the *tambo;* and—behold, we turn the corner and there is the *tambo, lejitito,* as I said; and there in the corral stand mules. My party most clearly has arrived and is waiting."

There *was* a party belonging with the mules, of course. But the cheerful traveler was surely too previous with his conclusion. With the clatter of the little cavalcade's arrival two men came out of the mud rest house stretching and rubbing their eyes. There was an obvious *arriero* and— The excellency gave a hysterical squeal of joy overlaid by astonishment.

"*Cien santos!* My secretary!"

He fell off his mule and rushed upon the man. His first anxiety was—

"You have the money?"

"But surely, your excellency," the secretary replied. "Upon seeing me, there was no question of your signature, just as those ruffians had said, and the money was forthcoming immediately for your release, for which and for your good health I offer the most heartfelt thanks to the good God."

Then the excellency found time for his secondary thought.

"But your—but this is a marvel!—your own health? Your—your ear, with the ring in it?"

"*Miravel!*" murmured the cheerful traveler to Benson as he drew his mule alongside. "How it is curious that one should converse at this hour of morning about ears, and how particularly curious that the Señor Americano's companion should be meeting the very man whom I came to meet."

Benson turned quickly in the saddle

and saw that a rifle protruded from under the cheerful man's poncho and pointed directly at his stomach. The man grinned at him cheerfully.

"The señor doubtless has a pistol, no? In the saddle bag? Ah, I hoped so. Perhaps the señor would not mind giving me his word that he will make no attempt to reach for it."

Benson looked into that face, cheerful still but wary and hard as a hawk's; and as he looked, remembrance came to him of a face that had seared itself into his mind, though he had looked upon it only for a moment—a face hanging from a beam in a mud wall within a few feet of his own and screaming in mortal agony. The cheerful one grinned in friendly manner.

'The señor has a most dangerous memory for faces. But—your pardon—about that pistol?"

Benson grinned sourly in turn.

"Well, you've got the drop on me," he admitted. "And I'm not interested worth a hoot in that fellow's money. But I'll tell you—if you try to take the man back, I'll give you a scrap for him."

"Señor," the other assured him, "we are not interested in the man for one minute after his money has arrived. Your word, then, about that pistol? Good. With your permission, then, I shall mask myself and attend to those jabbering others, who, I am sure, will give me no trouble at all. But first, *El Rey* with his compliments presents to you this package."

Benson, in his capacity of star reporter, had long ago acquired the faculty of keeping one eye upon happenings while he squinted with the other upon his notebook. With one eye, therefore, he observed how the cheerful one, with ease and assurance, herded the excellency with his secretary and the *arriero* into the corral and superintended the loading of two mules with extraordinarily heavy packs. The other eye he devoted to the opening of the package.

It contained a short note—and an ear with a jeweled ring in it.

The latter was singularly fresh and firm looking; though, at close quarters, a trifle transparent. Benson skimmed over the letter while he watched the happenings. He absorbed it in scraps.

Forgive the hoax—necessary that the man should escape—if he should suspect us of the mercy of letting him go, the salutary terror which we must inspire in him and his kind would be lost utterly. My indebtedness for your assistance I repay by presenting you with a credit which newspaper men of your country have established as their forte—that of rescuing prisoners from ferocious banditti. Return, I beg you, the earring which we borrowed from that secretary—a faithful fellow. Pity that he serves such a master.

So Benson read and snorted. Then his eye took in a postscript.

In the old medical school my forte was anatomical models.

Then at last Benson saw and understood, and in spite of his chagrin, was forced to admit admiration for cleverness. And in a little while more, since in order to be a good reporter one must also be a good sportsman, he was able to laugh.

He was still laughing long after the cheerful traveler had driven two heavily loaded pack mules round the bend of the trail and had waved a cheerful farewell. He laughed even when the diplomat cursed him venomously for his levity in the face of disaster; and when the latter spitefully wanted to know what bribe, what gift, that prince of *ladrones* had sent him to withhold his defense in the time of need, Benson did not knock him off his mule, but told him—

"He gave me, señor, two gifts priceless to my profession—an insight into human nature and a perfect front-page story."

A *Voluntary Crusoe*

By EDWARD T. PERKINS

STRANGE tales of the sea are many, but few are stranger than this one. The third officer of a New England whaler, after a year's cruise, dissatisfied to the breaking point with the captain, asks to be put ashore at the first land sighted. It turns out to be the island of Juan Fernandez in the South Pacific Ocean, long the chosen exile of Alexander Selkirk—

for the same reasons—upon whose adventures is founded the immortal "Robinson Crusoe." This occurred about the year 1852. The tale, thrilling and unusual, is yet told with all simplicity by Edward T. Perkins, the ship's doctor, who wrote a volume about this remarkable cruise. The book was published in 1854 in New York City.

WHAT cool and delightful evenings! How brightly the full moon rises from behind the white clouds and steadily pursues her course through the blue ether; while our ship, as she dashes along, joyfully welcomes the southeast wind. Some of the inmates of the deep seem influenced by Nature's harmony; for many a phosphorescent streak marks the course of porpoises and alvicore in their gambols alongside and under the vessel's bow. We were sailing down the coast of Chili and, after seeing nothing but sky and sea, together with a few barren mountains, for more than four months, our eyes were to be gladdened on the morrow by the green hills of Juan Fernandez.

For the objects of our voyage it was not necessary that we should visit this island; but dissensions having arisen among the officers, it was determined by mutual consent that Mr. Gurrie, bag and baggage, should be left here. These difficulties had extended to the crew, each siding with his favorite officer, if favoritism could exist; so that anything approximating to Odd-Fellowship among them had long since vanished. It was rumored, and confidently believed by some, that at the critical moment Mr. Gurrie would renounce his intention; but their estimate of his character was too superficial. He had said that "if there was a rock in the ocean big enough to hold him, he'd leave the ship"; and he was not a man to be diverted by trifles.

The wished-for morning came; far ahead something like a faint cloud was seen in the horizon, and the welcome cry of "Land-O!" was heard once more. There were deep valleys, whose furrowed sides were clothed with a sea of verdure, sweeping upward in gentle undulations to the dark ridges. Everything wore an air of inspiriting freshness, that can only be appreciated by those who have long been sojourners upon the ocean. In a miniature bay, and standing off-and-on, was a bark, her white sails in beautiful contrast with the dark green foliage. It proved to be *C*——, of S——, Captain D——; her boats were ashore, engaged in fishing. Of the finny tribe an abundance may be found in these waters, and they are easily taken.

In due season, the main yard was hauled aback, and Mr. Gurrie commenced preparations for landing. The starboard boat was first lowered, into which jumped Captain Buck with a picked crew, who pulled off for the bark, probably to seek advice or investigate those points of law touching the part he was to play in the affair. The result of their deliberations we could never learn; we only know that when he returned, he drew up a paper stating that "he (Mr. Gurrie) was acting of his own free will, and that he (Mr. Gurrie) relieved Captain Buck from any consequences that might ensue." This interesting document was formally signed, sealed and delivered in the presence of ——.

Then arose a murmur of discontent among the brethren, especially the starboard watch. With all his failings, Mr. Gurrie was a good seaman, and never indulged in familiarity with his subordinates. He was a man who in storm or calm was cool and self-possessed and, in matters pertaining to seamanship, a person in whom we had every confidence. I reverted to the days of Robinson Crusoe and Selkirk, and to the adventures of the the latter the case of Mr. Gurrie bore a strong resemblance. Alexander Selkirk, an officer, became dissatisfied with Captain Stradling, and declared that rather than be "straddled" over by him any longer, he preferred remaining upon an uninhabited island in the midst of the ocean. Hezekiah Gurrie, Jr., an officer, became dissatisfied with Captain Buck, and declared that rather than be "bucked" about by him any longer, he preferred remaining upon any rock or island in the middle of the ocean. When I saw his athletic proportions clothed with a pair of dark-blue trousers and shirt of the same color, over which a pair of broad white suspenders were crossed, I thought it needed but the huge chako and musket to complete his equipment as a grenadier. His chest, bedding and other little items of personal comfort were brought up and lowered into the boat, together with a quantity of beef, pork and sea-biscuit; last of all, he shook hands with us, accompanied by the usual "so long," and departed.

Mr. Grasper, who commanded the boat, had been exceedingly officious that morning, perhaps from a consciousness of the responsible duty he was called upon to perform; he even condescended to hint to me that he anticipated nothing short of open mutiny, headed by Mr. Gurrie himself, so soon as the boat should reach the shore, and had consequently provided himself with a brace of pistols and a sheath-knife. With a picked crew the boat shoved off, Mr. G. waving farewell; the old cooper, who was given to the "melting mood," dropped a tear to his memory.

We watched its receding form until it reached the shore, where it remained about fifteen minutes, and then returned, nothing having occurred to disturb Mr. Grasper's equanimity. Mr. Gurrie had again shaken hands with the boat's crew, wishing them "greasy luck" as they shoved off the boat. Although, like Selkirk, he preferred solitude, I do not think he was the man to say, "I never heard a sound so dismal as their parting oars."

On its return, the boat paid a visit to the bark, by which we were favored with an exchange of diet, for it brought us a load of fish, a luxury after sustaining nature so long upon the contents of the "harness cask."

With nothing further to detain us, we squared the main yard, up helm and away, the bark keeping company; and by sunset the green hummock of Juan Fernandez loomed dimly in the twilight.

That night, unknown to me, a demonstration was made by a certain clique in behalf of their absent officer. A quantity of provision, boat-compass, sail and other necessaries were secretly stowed away in the waist boat; and it was arranged by Mr. Easy, who headed the plot, and who had now become third officer, that during the middle watch, he, the cooper, carpenter and two of the boat-steerers should lower away—the fall and blocks having been previously greased to prevent noise—and return to the island we had just left.

At the critical moment, when everything was prepared and each man stood by with a small bundle of clothes, the cooper's fortitude deserted him. The "old bridge" had carried him safely over; besides, he had broken bread aboard of her. No; at the eleventh hour he concluded to cling to her, like an affectionate son to his mother's bosom. Entreaties and expostulations were unavailing; like an epidemic, the feeling of disaffection extended to all, and the plot was abandoned through the instability of one of its members. I know not whether Captain Buck ever heard of it, nor do I recollect having previously mentioned it.

Concluding

Smoky Seas

A Serial of the Seal Poachers in Russian Waters

By CLEMENTS RIPLEY

THE sealer *Bering*, under the command of Morgan Hawke, was poaching in Russian waters, rounding up seals at the forbidden rookeries instead of in the open sea. All the men, hunters and sailors alike, had come willingly except Peter Chadwick, whom Hawke had practically shanghaied in Yokohama and who had since worked and fought his way to the position of mate.

Then the crew of the *Kamloops*, commanded by "Swipes" Billiter, a cockney whom Chadwick had encountered in Yokohama, landed near the *Bering's* men. There was a fight; the *Bering's* skipper managed to steal Billiter's sealskins. The *Kamloops* stood out to sea, and soon thereafter the Russian officials, to whom Billiter had gone with his story, captured the *Bering* with her hold full of stolen skins. But Morgan Hawke managed to hide rifles and ammunition in the hold before the ship was boarded and the crew arrested.

They waited at Petropavlovsk for sentence to be passed. Then they knew they would go to the salt mines for life. One day Swift, one of the hunters, madly planned to kill a guard, but Hawke and Chadwick managed to quiet him. It would do no good, Hawke told the excited crew. They would only be killed. He knew of a better plan.

But when Chadwick asked him about it alone that night, Hawke confessed he had no plan.

"I had to say something to get them quiet," he explained.

Escape was as far away as ever.

CHADWICK was studying the window bars again. It was two days now since Swift's madness, and so far neither he nor the skipper had been able to think of a plan of escape that did not entail the probable killing of most of them. And things were coming to a head again, rapidly.

Ever since that time Swift had gone about white and silent. For the first day the skipper had been able to hold his ascendency over the men. They had seemed a different lot, buoyed up by his promise of a plan that at least promised action. But in the last twenty-four hours they had become restless and

morose again, and it was evident that Swift and Peace were hatching up something.

Chadwick was studying the window bars hopelessly. They had become almost a mania with him in the last two days. He saw them when he was at work in the daytime, and he filed them endlessly in his dreams. He knew every roughness and fleck of rust on them. He found himself shaking them when he came in at sundown as if in some mysterious manner they might have become loosened during the day. He looked at them when he first opened his eyes in the morning, and he watched the dark gather against them and crept over to run his hands over them while the others were asleep.

Bars. Three inch-thick pieces of round iron, set solidly and so close he could just run his arm between them. And beyond, in the blue haze of gathering dusk, the *Bering* and the rifles.

"If I had a file I could cut through these things like cheese," he mourned aloud.

"If ay have million dollars ay buy me new pair pants so ay have some dry one to sleep in," was Oscaar's comment.

Some of the others laughed harshly, but Chadwick was beyond laughing now.

"It wouldn't take a file," he insisted desperately. "Any piece of steel would do. A watch spring—anything! Isn't there a piece of steel in this crowd?" he pleaded.

Hawke looked at him sharply, for his tone showed the strain he was under.

"Better come away from that window," he said. "They cleaned us out pretty thoroughly on the patrol boat. I know I haven't got any steel."

"But ——! Somebody must have something we could make a file out of. Any old piece of steel—"

One or two of the men went through the motions of looking through their pockets. Most of them were uninterested. Swift, deep in a whispered conversation with Jim Peace, in the corner, snarled, "Oh, go to ——," without looking up.

But Benton, the Cape Cod man, got to his feet with a curious, almost startled expression.

"Saay!" he drawled. "Saay, I guess mebbe you never worked in a shoe fact'ry."

"Aw, shut up," Swift growled, but the rest were suddenly seized in a quick, tense wave of excitement.

Benton went on with maddening deliberation.

"Well, I worked in one daown to Lynn one winter, 'baout five—no, lessee, musta been seven year ago. An' with every shoe they made there was a little, thin piece of spring steel went int' the sole, just about the instep. Dunno what 'twas for, but—"

But nobody was listening now. Peace had kicked his boot off and was examining the sole. A quick babble went up as the others crowded around.

"Don't see haow I come to fergit a thing like that—" Benton was saying as Chadwick gripped him by the arm.

"Listen—listen! Have all shoes got it?"

"Saay, what you tryin' to do—pull the arm off me? I won't say they all do, but all I ever made did. Used to be a little, thin piece o' steel—'baout a inch, or mebbe 'twas a inch an' a haaf—"

The skipper's voice cut through the clamor—

"Shut up. Shut *up!* Some of that crowd down-stairs may know English. Now we've got to have a boot—"

There was a sudden silence during which it was plain to see what was going on in every man's mind. It is one thing to face a dozen rifles in a mad, desperate moment, and quite another to risk a Siberian winter barefoot. Peace hastily put on his boot again.

Men looked from one to another but no one spoke. Hawke shrugged. Then he stooped and began to work at his shoe laces.

There was something about it that caught at the mate's idea of sportsmanship. He said—

"Wait, sir, I'll—"

But Oscaar already had his boot off and in his hand. He held it toward the skipper.

"T'at's aw-right, sir. Ay get me some rags an' parcel may foot op— Ay'm doing t'at lotsa tam' in t'e ol' country. Here."

There was a general murmur of approbation. But Hawke shook his head.

"You're a good little man, Oscaar, but keep your boot. I'm responsible for your being here, and I'll—"

The little Norwegian took hold of the sole and gave a quick tug. There was a squashing sound as the water-soaked upper ripped away like paper.

"Luk, sir. T'at boot iss no gude anahow. By —— when ay'm gettin' back to 'Frisco, ay'm gon' lick t'e faller which sell him to me."

Hawke took the proffered sole. There was a heart-stopping moment while he bent and wrenched at it. Then with a quick effort he ripped the layers apart. A thin piece of spring steel tinkled on to the floor.

"Maybe ay am not gon' lick t'at faller after all," Oscaar said.

CHAPTER XVII

BEFORE DAWN

TO CUT through an inch-thick iron bar with one piece of smooth steel is a task to break a man's heart. But two make all the difference, for with one, if you are patient, you may notch the other into a very fair imitation of a saw. Oscaar's other boot went the way of the first, and he bound up his foot in rags furnished from the scanty clothing of the rest. Nobody cared what he sacrificed now, for the work was already begun.

Very careful work it had to be. The sentry paced back and forth fifteen feet below, and through the cracks in the floor they could hear the guttural talk of the guard down-stairs. The skipper began it, kneeling on the floor with his hands muffled in strips torn from a woolen undershirt, and by the time his fingers gave out another was ready to take it up. There was very little sleep in the upper part of the blockhouse that night. By morning, when they heard the first sounds of stirring from below, one bar was cut through.

Chadwick thought that day and the next were the longest he had ever spent. Straining in the harness or heaving at stranded logs, there was never a minute when he wasn't seeing one of their jailers come up the ladder to inspect their quarters and discover the labor of the night before. And Oscaar's improvised boots! He was morbidly certain that they would lead to inquiry. And nine desperate men, suddenly uplifted on a surge of hope, can not help showing it, however much they may counterfeit despair. It seemed impossible that the guard could miss the excitement that blazed in Swift's black eyes, or ignore the tense hilarity that greeted Oscaar's feeblest joke. If any one laughed or sneezed or spat or swore Chadwick's heart stopped beating and his spine was a column of ice.

And still, incredibly, the guard drove them with dull indifference, and all night long, the thin scratch of the saw filled the room with a noise that seemed louder than thunder.

It was no longer, "if we get out," it was "when we get out." "What are we gonna do when we get out?"

Morgan Hawke, on his knees by the window, half-way through the last bar, wiped his forehead on his arm and said:

"We're going to get aboard the *Bering* and get those rifles, some way. After that I don't know—but we're going to get those rifles."

The whisper ran from lip to lip in the dark—

"He says we're gonna get the rifles."

There was no doubt who was in command right now.

A little after midnight of the third night fat Peterson, who was taking his turn at the sawing, fell back from the window with a gasp that was like a sob and said—

"She's through!"

Then came slow straining minutes in the dark, while they bent the heavy bars

back by main strength until the opening was cleared.

Morgan Hawke crouched on the sill. Chadwick, peering under his arm, saw the dark bulk of the sentry turn the corner and heard the rattle of his accoutrements as he shifted his rifle and stopped to breathe on his hands. Then he came on again, sauntering, humming a little song.

The bulk of the skipper suddenly disappeared from the window. There was a thud, a threshing, a grunt—and then two tiny clicks, as of a forefinger nail snapped twice against the butt of a rifle.

"Quick now!" Chadwick had slipped off his canvas jacket and lowered it from the sill, straining back as Peterson went down it, hand over hand. Swift went next. Oscaar. Saarenpa. O'Connor. One after another until there was no one left but himself, and he crawled through the open, hung by his hands, and dropped. O'Connor and Benton caught him noiselessly, and set him on his feet.

They had already stripped the coat and cap from the body of the sentry and the skipper held them out to Saarenpa.

"Get into this and take the rifle. You talk Russian. If anybody asks questions, you're a guard taking us—oh, anywhere, just so you can keep 'em talking 'til one of us can get our hands on him. Come on then. Let's go."

They moved off through the dark. Hawke led, and Saarenpa brought up the rear, tripping over the tails of his coat. The dark mass of the blockhouse faded behind them and presently they were threading a narrow alley between two rows of black buildings.

Stumbling over the half-frozen ruts, twisting and turning, but keeping together by sense of touch, and going always downhill, they came at last to the harbor and heard the *lap-lap* of dark water against the shore.

A hundred yards to the right there stretched the spidery shadow of a long wharf. As they looked, a light showed on its farther end and moved toward the shore. It flickered, winked out as the man who carried it passed behind a pile of lumber or a shed, and then showed again.

"Quiet," the skipper cautioned, and they drew into the shadow of a building.

The light reached the shore end, hesitated, and then came bobbing directly toward them. There was no chance to run. They flattened themselves against the wall and waited.

Swift swore softly. Oscaar whispered:

"May locky knife iss on t'e schooner. Ain' t'at stinkin'?"

Hawke whispered—

"Shut up—he's coming."

They could see the man himself now—a burly figure, a watchman evidently, for he carried a short club in his left hand. He came on at a leisurely saunter, his legs making flickering shadows in the lantern-light, while they crouched close against the wall, not daring to breathe. And then just when it seemed that he was going to pass them he stopped.

It may have been some tiny sound that caught his ear, or perhaps it was just an intuitive feeling that some one was near. At any rate, he turned, listening, and spoke, as if only half certain that any one was there.

Chadwick, who could almost have touched him with his hand felt the blood pound in his temples, for the man was looking directly at him. Then, as if to make sure, he raised the lantern. At the same instant Saarenpa hit him with the rifle butt and he pitched forward without a sound.

As if that had been a signal a bell clanged back in the town with a startled clash and jangle that shattered the stillness like a blow.

Hawke snatched the lantern and whispered—

"Come on—follow me!"

O'Connor gasped.

"Mother o' God! They've found the sintry."

They were racing through the blackness, with the light dancing twenty feet ahead.

"This way—left!"

They sheered off. Planking thundered

under their feet, the planking of the wharf. The bell clanged and rolled.

"Here—those first two boats. Swift, Peace, Peterson, Saarenpa—in the port one with me. Take the other three in the starboard one, Mr. Chadwick. Get aboard—lively! You, Peterson—jump or stay behind."

The rattle of a chain. "Saarenpa! Saarenpa! Where's that —— Finn? Blow these locks loose—not that way, not that way! Oh, who the —— ever told you you could handle a rifle? Give it to me."

There were two flashes. Fragments of metal flew. The bell beat and rolled. Windows began to go up in near-by houses. People called out excitedly.

"Oscaar—Benton—O'Connor!" Chadwick heard them answer their names and saw them tumble into the boat. He shoved off, scrambled aboard.

"Get those oars out! You, Benton, you're sitting on 'em. Now pull for it! —— that bell!"

It beat and pounded like the frightened feet of a runaway horse. Lanterns began to flicker and dance along the shore. A drum rattled off a quick tattoo. As the boat surged to the stroke tumult gathered behind it like a gathering storm.

"Snatch her! Snatch her if you want to see 'Frisco again! Here, Oscaar, double-bank him! That's the stuff! Starboard—starboard! Steady as she goes! Oh, —— that bell!"

"Ay guess we wakin' 'em op, sir. Boat comin' op to port!"

A dark shape shot alongside.

"Keep the wharf dead astern as long as you can see it, Mr. Chadwick. And get aboard and get those rifles."

"Yes, sir."

They drew apart again. There was no difficulty in seeing the wharf now. Lanterns bobbed and danced along its whole length. And presently at the end of it there flashed half a dozen flame spurts and there was a rattle like dropping shot in a tin pan.

Something whined overhead and Chadwick laughed from sheer excitement.

"Shooting blind. They can't possibly see us. Wait 'til we get hold of those rifles, though, and we'll show 'em some real shooting."

Oscaar gasped between strokes:

"Ay give fife dollar if ay had may knife back t'ere. But ay guess we gettin' pretty gude lok anahow."

O'Connor muttered:

"Pray to the Saints, ye square-headed heathen! 'Tis that brings ye the luck. Though a knuckle-bone of a man was hanged in the dark o' the moon is good, an' I'd be the last to deny it."

"Pshaw!" Benton grunted contemptuously. "You Cath'lics make me sick. Lot o' good your saints done Spinelli."

"Sure what d'ye think the blessed Saints are to be worryin' themselves over a —— Eytalian? An' at that he's better than a whole fist-full o' Cape Cod heretics."

"Saay—" Benton was beginning, when Chadwick cut him short.

"Mind your —— oars! We're swinging off. Shut up, O'Connor, this is no debating society. Row!"

The clang of the bell grew fainter across the water. The shouting died to a murmur. They pulled ahead through the darkness. And presently Benton, in the bow, said, "Schooner dead ahead, sir," and they shot in alongside and scrambled up over the rail.

The other boat came in almost at the same time. There was a startled grunt aft, an oath, a splash. Somebody said:

"They had a watchman aboard! Well, they ain't got one now."

Then for what seemed hours Chadwick stumbled in the reeking blackness of the hold until, more by accident than by recollection, he put his hand on the cache and drew a long, sobbing breath.

The rifles were still there.

The bar of gray across the east gradually spread higher and wider. There was no dawn, but presently things began to take shape and outline—first the schooner itself, so that men moving about on deck became men and not merely dark shadows, then the tangle of wreckage

overside in the oily gray water, and finally the shore-line itself, half seen through the wisps of mist that trembled over the harbor.

It was cold. The men shivered at the rail, silent, their faces gray and drawn in the early light. Chadwick thought, "They'll be coming any minute now," and he wondered dully why he didn't feel any excitement or anxiety. He told himself that within half an hour probably the fighting would start.

He looked down at his rifle, and told himself that presently he would put it to his shoulder and look through the sights and pull a trigger, and a man would die. Or perhaps he would die himself—lie down on the deck-planking and never have to get up any more. The deck-planking ran lengthwise, and he would lie crossways. If his feet were in the scuppers his head would just about reach to that brown stain, and he would never have to get up any more. Never have to—

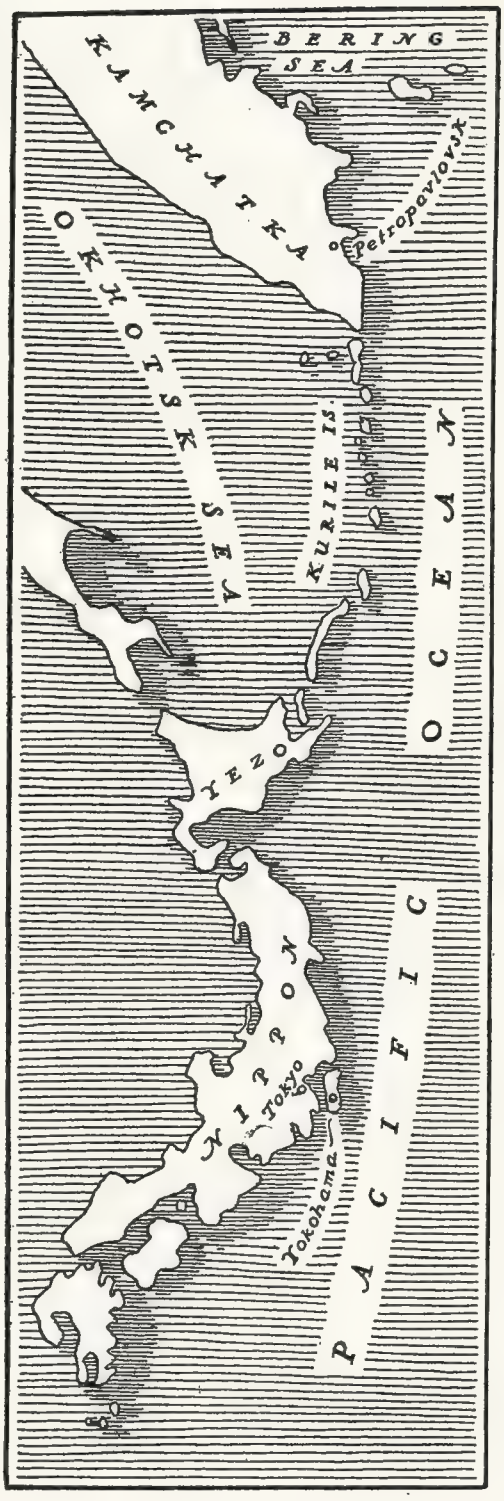
He wrenched his eyes away from the deck with an effort, shivered a little and blew on his fingers. A few feet away Swift ran a rag through the barrel of his rifle, gave the breech a final wipe, and cuddled the stock against his cheek.

"They're comin'," he said softly, joyfully. "Listen!"

For a moment there was nothing but the early morning hush. Then they heard the beat of oars across the water. Aboard the schooner locks snapped shut and there was a stir and shuffle as the men leaned to the rail and braced their feet.

A boat crawled out of the mist along the shore, and another, and another. Three of them crawling across the gray water with their oars rising and falling like the legs of a centipede. They were filled with little, black figures. They made Chadwick think of mechanical bugs. He kept his eyes on them, rigidly. He wouldn't look back at the deck-planking.

"Six—seven hundred," Swift was saying thoughtfully. He estimated the distance with half-closed eyes.



Benton said, "Five!" aggressively, and fired. The bullet splashed short.

"Seven, you web-footed clam-digger."

Swift snapped his sights up and snuggled the butt into the hollow of his shoulder. He hitched his left elbow up twice. The rifle cracked. A little spurt flew up between two of the boats.

"Seven, like I told you." He opened the breech and the empty shell tinkled out on deck.

"Yeah—after you'd seen me."

The two, joined by Peace, now opened fire in a leisurely fashion, calling their shots like men on a target range.

"Low an' to the left."

"Try holdin' a full bead. This haze is liable to fool you this mornin'."

"If I had me a telescope sight—"

The boats came on and the bullets threw up little spurts around them. Swift, watching his shot critically, brought his rifle down and said—

"Got one."

"Like ——!" Benton said, but as he spoke one of the little figures rose up stiffly and tumbled down again.

A moment later, Peace made a hit and the boat on the right slewed around. Presently they could see a little, black form—one of the oarsmen—hanging over the gunwale. There was some splashing and then the boat straightened out and came on again.

Little spurts of smoke began to come from the bows of all three boats. A bullet smacked against the schooner's side, followed by a thin crackle, like some one crumpling stiff paper. Chadwick thought of a panorama of the Battle of Gettysburg he had once seen at a fair.

The little toy boats crawled on across the gray water, and now the flashes were continuous and there was an occasional *thut* of a bullet. One hit the rail a foot or so away. Swift ducked and then grinned shamefacedly.

"You never hear the one that hits you."

Chadwick nodded and fingered the hole incuriously. He was thinking about the deck-planking. Maybe it would be more comfortable to lie lengthwise.

"What the ——'s the matter with you? Sleep-walking or what?"

He glanced around to find that O'Connor and the skipper had opened fire.

He said, "Yes, sir—nothing, sir," and set his sights and began to shoot mechanically. He took careful aim, pulled the trigger, felt the shock against his shoulder, threw out the empty shell. Did it again—did it again—over and over and over.

There was a part of his brain that was amazed at his own apathy. Those little figures out there were men—men! Frightened men, gripping their guns with all the strength they had. Steel-jacketed bullets were tearing live flesh. And he shot and shot and shot, as if breaking little clay birds in a shooting gallery.

He wondered whether the others felt the same way. Swift had settled down to the rail like a part of it, and the way his cheek touched the stock of his gun was a caress. All the bitterness was gone out of his face and his eyes were almost tender in the compelling joy of pulling a trigger and seeing his shots take effect.

Benton, on the other hand—his lips were drawn back from his teeth, and his brow was knit. He never loosed a round without a curse for a miss, or a savage, snarling laugh for a hit.

"There! Naow caount your men!"

Peace, firing away with worried care; the skipper, profoundly indifferent; O'Connor, clumsy and excited.

The crackling was louder now—like firecrackers—and the little, black figures differentiated and became men in gray coats and flat caps. There was one in the middle boat who flapped his elbow each time before he fired. Chadwick came to watch for that flap and was dully disappointed when the man sagged forward and disappeared into the bottom of the boat.

Then the left-hand boat swung around and headed for the shore. There seemed to be an argument about it, for one man struck at the rowers and waved his arms, but the boat kept on. And presently the

other two turned with a good deal of splashing and followed it.

Swift fired a few more shots and then wiped the breech of his rifle and set it down with a sigh. Oscaar and Saarenpa and Peterson raised a thin cheer which died off half-heartedly.

Chadwick laid his rifle on the deck with the utmost care, and then slid down beside it and went to sleep.

CHAPTER XVIII

PARLEY AND COMMAND

HE OPENED his eyes and lay staring for a moment at the leaden sky. Then he remembered and heaved himself to his feet.

Oscaar and Saarenpa and Peterson lay in a tangled heap by the stump of the foremast. Peace was stretched on a hatch cover, and Benton, breathing heavily and twitching like a dreaming dog, sprawled his lean length over a pile of cordage.

Hawke and Swift stood at the rail with their rifles in their hands, watching a boat that came toward them from the shore.

Chadwick reached for his rifle and then put it down again, for there were only three in the boat—two rowers and the man in the stern, who carried a white flag.

The skipper stared under his hand. Then:

"It's the governor," he said. "Go get Saarenpa, Mr. Chadwick. He wants to talk to us."

Getting Saarenpa was easier to talk about than to do. Chadwick and Swift together hoisted the little Finn on to his feet. He promptly slumped down again. They hoisted him up, shook him, banged him with their knees.

"Wake up there! Saarenpa, wake up! The skipper wants you, Saarenpa. Easy! Easy there! Grab him, Swift. It's all right, Saarenpa—it's me. All right. Steady now, nothing's going to hurt you. Skipper wants you, over by the rail."

The Finn staggered over, rubbing his eyes and yawning prodigiously. By the time Chadwick had followed the others were beginning to wake, and the boat was only a short distance away.

The governor clung to his white flag with a worried expression until Hawke held up both empty hands. Then he seemed to take heart and burst into speech—

"What's he say, Saarenpa?"

The little man listened carefully, frowning. Then he nodded.

"Oyess! He say you come back."

"Huh? Tell him he's got a nerve anyhow."

Saarenpa puzzled over it a minute and then did his best with it, whereupon the governor's tone became soothing and he spread his hands in the manner of one giving a blessing.

"He say, 'No more work'n.' He say he'sa gon' treat us nice 'til dot sheep comin' tek us to Okhotsk. Me ay don' think'n dot," the little Finn added.

"Me either," Hawke agreed with a frown, and Swift said, "Aw, tell him to go to ——."

Saarenpa looked at the skipper questioningly, and the latter said:

"You can tell him we're not coming, so he can save his breath on that. Tell him it's no use sending out any more boats. If he does, we've got plenty of ammunition—bullets, you understand—and we can shoot his boats up as fast as he sends them. Tell him that."

The governor heard Saarenpa labor through a dozen sentences. Then he stood up in the boat and spoke—with gestures. He pointed to the fort guarding the entrance to the harbor, a squat blur through the haze. He swept a hand in a comprehensive gesture that took in the bare, huddled, little town, the bleak tundra swamp and the forest beyond. And he ended with an abrupt gesture, palms up, like a man tossing a ball. Then he stopped and assumed an attitude, arms folded, chin up, and a little on one side, that said as plainly as words, "Take it or leave it."

Saarenpa translated haltingly, with little, groping pauses.

"He say ain' gotta send no more boat—Dotsa awright, ain' gotta do nothin'. Fort got beeg gon. Can' get past dotsa way. No good. He say all 'round dotsa swamp—woods—" Saarenpa swept his own arms about the horizon—"Hunnert tausen' mile dotsa swamp—woods. No good. Winter she'sa com'n'—gon' be col,' dotsa swamp. Notting to eat. Dotsa no good."

"He's right about that," the skipper mused aloud. "We'd have to go a thousand miles to be safe."

"Also," Saarenpa went on stolidly, "also 'bout two-tree day now iss com'n' beeg—me I don't know ver' good dots word—beeg sheep weet' gon? Ya, dotsa right—cruiser. An' dotsa cruiser, she'sa gon' blow us op!" He repeated that palms-up gesture of tossing a ball, and now they knew what it meant. "So dotsa no good. Me, ay dunno," he finished.

It was quite complete, the fort to keep them from getting past the harbor mouth, the thousand miles of cold swamp and woods and the cruiser, daily expected. There was a hasty conference. In the middle of it the governor spoke again, keeping his posture with some difficulty as the boat rocked.

"He say if we com'n' now dotsa awright—he'sa gon' treat us nice. If we wait'n' he'sa gon' hang us for kill'n' dotsa faller dis mornin'. Mebbe so, I dunno. Me, ay t'ink he'sa gon' do dot anahow."

"Me, ay t'ink he'sa gotta catch us first," Swift said, and there was a mutter of agreement.

Chadwick said—

"It looks like a thin time—but I'd rather chance the swamps than go back there." They nodded.

Hawke ran his eye speculatively over the dismasted vessel. He spoke slowly, weighing the chances:

"We'd probably freeze or starve in the swamps, or be picked up. They know the country and we don't. We can't sail anywhere in this condition, even if there was a chance of running the fort, which there might be in a fog. We've got mighty little ammunition, if he knew it. And the cruiser's due here any time if he's telling the truth."

He paused and then turned suddenly to the others.

"I'll have nobody say I persuaded him to stay. If you want to go back, now's your chance. I'm not going myself, but don't let that influence you. Speak up."

He eyed one after another. All looked grave and discouraged, but no one seemed to want to go back.

"Nobody then? All right, Saarenpa, tell him to go to ——. I wish I knew enough Russian to do it myself. And, Saarenpa! Just add anything you can think of, will you?"

The little man turned to the rail with a grin.

"Aye, aye, zir. Dotsa kin' Rossian ay know bes'."

It is doubtful whether any Russian governor had a better opportunity of hearing at first hand what a lot of American sailors thought of him. The crew could not understand the words, but no one could have mistaken the import of the hissing, crackling sentences. As Swift remarked—

"I may not get the words, but I sure know the tune."

In the midst of it the governor spat an order to his rowers and departed with his little imperial quivering and outraged dignity in every line of his fat back. The crew cursed him obscenely as long as he was in hearing and then sat down on the deck and regarded the skipper inquiringly.

Chadwick said—

"Well, we're free anyhow."

Swift said: "Yeah! Free as air. We can do anything we want now—starve or freeze or wait 'til the cruiser gets us."

Morgan Hawke walked thoughtfully to the cabin companion and went below. For a while they cursed the governor and the fort and the swamps and the cruiser and the mastless wreck that was the *Bering*, but it was half-hearted, spiritless cursing. For the most part they sat about the deck and stared at the horizon and their eyes burned in their heads

with weariness. To the east the fort squatted low and menacing above the channel. South, they could see the town, built on a hillside for the better exposure of its raw, desolate ugliness. All the rest of the world was a waste of gray-green tundra and the cold blue of forests. A chill smell of wet salt came in from the open sea beyond the fort and the harbor mouth, and they heard the *lap-lap-lap* of little ripples against the wreckage of masts and sodden canvas overside, like a little fat man chuckling.

The skipper came on deck again and they stared at him dully.

He said:

"They've pretty well gutted her. The skins are gone of course, and about everything movable. But there's water—the scuttle-butt is half full. And they've left half a dozen cases of ship's biscuit. It's moldy, which is why they didn't take it, I suppose, but if anybody's hungry, there it is."

Oscaar and Peace got up at that and went below. The rest were either too tired or too discouraged to bother. Swift stretched himself full length on the deck and said—

"Well, anyhow, we don't have to work, thank God."

Morgan Hawke looked over the wreckage.

"There's just a chance," he said, "that we could repair her."

"Ya crazy," Swift said. He did not move or open his eyes.

"They haven't left us any tools of course," the skipper went on thoughtfully. "But here's the *Bering* and yonder's her sticks—and there's nine of us."

"Ya crazy," Swift said again. "You can't make repairs without tools, and even if you could, how you gonna get past the fort? Think I'm gonna sweat myself to death doin' somethin' that can't be done?"

"Swift," said the skipper, "you've had a good deal of leeway for that jaw of yours lately. But from now on you'll either keep it shut or I'll break it. Understand?"

The first part of the sentence was smooth, almost toneless, but the final word cracked out like a rifle shot. It was the first time he had spoken that way in weeks. Hearing him Chadwick had a sudden feeling that the ship could really be repaired.

Ever since they had been in the blockhouse the skipper had seemed to be on the same footing with the rest. He had been no longer the captain, whose word was law, but a prisoner like themselves. Without intention most of them had even fallen out of the way of using the customary "sir" when they spoke to him. The hunters in particular had fallen into a habit of contradicting him at pleasure. He had, of course, stemmed the tide of Swift's attempt to make a hopeless break for freedom, but that had been a matter of force. They were still afraid of his fists.

But now, with the possibility of remasting his schooner, it seemed as if he had suddenly remembered that this was his ship and that he was in command. The change was intangible but none the less definite. There was authority in his tone. There could be no better proof of it than the fact that Swift half opened his eyes with a bewildered look and said, "Yes, sir," before he quite realized that he was saying anything at all.

Chadwick was far from thinking all this out at the time. In fact he did not think at all, but he caught his breath with a sudden inexplicable surge of confidence and for the first time since the capture he really began to hope.

The skipper was for wasting no time.

"Get Oscaar and Peace," he said. "I want all hands. And have them bring some biscuits for the rest. You can listen while you eat."

In the next twenty minutes he delivered a crisp lecture on the problem of stepping two heavy masts without the aid of tools. The crew listened dully, munching moldy sea-biscuit and fingering the splintered stumps of the masts or the scarred planking. One or two wandered to the rail and looked apathetically at the

tangle of masts and canvas and cordage overside.

"The windlass was smashed by shell fire," he finished, "so we'll mule the stuff aboard by hand. The first thing is to clear that mess and get a couple of spars aboard for shears. Swift, Peace, Benton, and myself will do that. Mr. Chadwick, will you take the rest of the men into the hold and clear the steps of the mast butts."

"Oscaar, Saarenpa, Peterson, O'Connor," the mate called the roll of those who were left. "Come on."

Oscaar got up wearily. Nobody else moved. It was not defiance, it was simply that the heart was gone out of them. Then Saarenpa got to his feet, slowly enough, partly by force of Oscaar's example, and partly by a habit of discipline too strong to be thrown off easily. But Peterson heaved a long sigh and stayed where he was, and O'Connor muttered:

"Aw, what the ——'s the good. Sure we'd never get past the fort."

Chadwick hesitated. He glanced at Hawke, who watched him curiously but offered neither help nor suggestion.

Never since his promotion had Chadwick hit a man to enforce an order. He had never had to. He had held his command as mate partly by accepted authority but principally because the men had liked him as much as they had disliked Maartens. They had been at pains to make things easy for him. But it was evident that the two sailors who sat by the hatch cover and looked at him with tired lusterless eyes had gone beyond the point where either of these considerations would weigh with them. And it was just as evident that his authority as mate and very possibly the discipline of the ship and with it the chance of escape itself hung on that minute.

He walked over to a shattered boat and picked up a muckle. He flexed his wrist once or twice.

"O'Connor, Peterson—when I give you an order, jump!"

He was surprized himself at the Chadwick voice.

They could hardly have been said to jump, but they did get to their feet.

"Aye, aye, sir," they said, and came.

He thought he caught a look of satisfaction on the skipper's face.

He led them below to the solidly emplaced butt of the mainmast. They promptly sat down and waited for orders, while he examined the step with a puzzled frown. As a matter of fact, he had only the vaguest idea what he was to do or how to do it. A month ago he would have asked advice and received it without loss of prestige, but after the last few minutes that would have been out of the question.

He was beginning to find out that there are two ways of handling men. You can make them like you and trust them to help you through a tight place because of their liking. Or, you can drive them—but to do this you must know every man's job better than he knows it himself. Up to now he had unconsciously used the first method, and used it successfully, but the last five minutes had taught him that there is a point where leading fails and driving must begin.

He thought.

"Any one of them probably knows more about this job than I do." That gave him his cue.

"All right," he said crisply. "Get to work and clear the step!" And he waited on tenter-hooks for one of them to ask him how to begin.

But without hesitation they said, "Aye, aye, sir," and got to work.

Somehow they did it. Chadwick learned two things that morning, and the more important was not how to get out the butt of a broken mainmast.

CHAPTER XIX

TWO DAYS

THEY cleared the steps that day and got the raffle overside straightened out, the wet canvas aboard and spread to dry and the ropes coiled down. It was hard, back-breaking work in any case, and

except for an old, rusty saw that the Russians had overlooked or thought not worth taking there were no tools. Morgan Hawke, racing against the coming of the cruiser, drove them to the limit of endurance—and they were men who had had no sleep for two days and a night and were working on a diet of moldy ship's biscuit.

Swift, curiously enough, once the skipper's authority had been reestablished, went at the job in a fury of nervous energy that carried him through the day, but big Jim Peace rebelled and had to be knocked down, and once Peterson sat on the hatch cover, weeping, and begged some one to kill him, until Chadwick fell on him with yells and oaths and kicked him on to his feet again.

There was no mercy for any one now. It was purely a question of how much their bodies could stand. Both the skipper and the mate carried muckles and were nervously prone to use them. The men's will power was gone. Nothing but fear could keep them going now. But they held them to it until dark made it impossible to see whether a man you had sent to a job twenty feet away was doing it or asleep.

Then the skipper called a halt and the men crawled away to the hunters' cabin amidships and slept wherever they dropped.

Chadwick went aft to his own cabin. His legs were shaking under him and his arms were numb from the elbow down. There is no physical work as hard as driving tired men to the last ounce.

"My ——" he told the skipper. "I'd rather be back hauling logs."

Morgan Hawke's eyes burned like coals, far back in his head, and his face was gray. He said:

"I guess you would, Mister—and so would the crew. But you won't. Those masts are going in."

"How d'you think we're going to get past the fort if we do get 'em in, sir?"

"You heard me! We're going to get 'em in. And that'll be day after tomorrow. We're going to run the batteries in the fog."

"But if we don't get a fog—"

"—— you, don't say 'if' to me!" Hawke blazed out at him in a sudden burst of rage, and stopped abruptly, while a slow flush crept over his face and his fingers worked, picking at the seams of his trousers. Then he went on, his voice cold and toneless with the effort of self-control. "We're bound to have one in these latitudes this time of year. And if we don't we'll run the batteries anyhow."

"They'll probably sink us." Chadwick jerked his shoulder toward the thin beam of the fort's searchlight, sweeping the channel some three miles away. He didn't really care much.

Hawke shrugged.

"Probably. But this is sure—we're going to try it whether they do or not. We'll get the top-masts aboard in the morning, Mister, and rig our shears."

There was not even a watch set that night. To Chadwick's surprized comment on the fact the skipper twitched an impatient shoulder.

"They won't bother us," he said. "They had a bellyful this morning, and with the fort commanding the channel and the cruiser coming up any day now they can afford to sit tight and wait. As I see it, they've got everything to lose and nothing to gain by trying to send out any more boats. Anyway, I'd rather take that chance than run the risk of trying to pile any more work on the men in their present state of mind. There's a limit to human endurance. Right now that's more of a problem than the Russians with me. Get your sleep, Mister, because you'll need it tomorrow."

They roused the crew at dawn. They flung them out of their bunks, one after another, and drove them on deck, where they stood about and rubbed lack-luster eyes until the skipper barked an order and he and the mate waded into them with the muckles, and they went overside, shivering, to the wet job of getting the topmasts made fast and ready for hoisting. Why they went—why two men were able to drive seven—is a matter that will

be clear only to those who understand the mysteries of ship's discipline.

They did rebel later, when after they had painfully raised the maintopmast inch by inch to the rail a lashing broke and it splashed back into the sea. They threatened to kill the skipper and he hit them with everything within reach and drove them back to do it all over again.

And slowly, agonizingly, they manhandled the two heavy sticks aboard until at last they lay full length on deck.

Then Oscaar lashed the tops together, while Peterson and O'Connor nailed some heavy cleats to the deck to keep the butts from slipping, and the rest rigged the main-boom tackle to raise them.

Slowly, as they heaved at the fall, the shears began to rise until at last they stood straight up with the point of intersection some thirty feet above the deck. And while the rest held them balanced the skipper made the guy-ropes fast.

"Let go," he said when he had finished, and they stood back and saw the labor of their hands.

It was curious, the effect it had on the minds of the crew—the sight of those shears, standing above the deck where nothing had stood before. Up to this moment they had worked because they were driven and for no other reason, toiling without heart and stealing whatever rest they could. But now, as they fell back, Swift drew a long breath, and said, "By——! By——!" softly and incredulously, and as the rest stared their faces became rapt, until O'Connor gave a wild Irish yell and threw himself into a clumsy breakdown on the hatch cover and they burst into profane tremulous speech.

They danced around the shears. They pointed with shaking forefingers, inarticulate with the sudden surge of their hope. And when the skipper shouted, "Over with you! Let's get the main-boom aboard," they poured over the rail with yells and shoutings to make it fast.

There was no more driving. Chadwick flung his muckle into the scuppers and heaved and sweated with the rest as they raised the big stick with the aid of the shears and the block of the main throat halliards. Oscaar cleated the butt to the deck, and when they had finished they had a crude derrick that could be raised or lowered at will and swung from side to side with the guy ropes.

Now everybody could see how the masts were going to be stepped, and everybody explained it at the top of his voice. The most curious thing about it all, Chadwick thought, was that once there was some tangible evidence that the work of re-masting could actually be done no one seemed to consider the fort or to remember that the chance of running its batteries was nothing short of desperate. They had minds for nothing but the present job of getting sail on her, and the rest could take care of itself.

It was dark by the time they had rigged the main-boom, and they made fast the final guys by sense of feel but, tired as they were, it was hard to make them eat their ship's biscuit and go below for their sleep. The derrick was up and they wanted to hoist something with it.

But for the skipper they would have gone on and tried to step the foremast in the dark.

Nobody cared that the beam of the fort's searchlight swung back and forth across the channel and finally turned and came to rest on the schooner itself, like some malignant challenging eye.

CHAPTER XX

CHAINS

IT WAS strange how they turned out at dawn, every man on his feet before Chadwick had made the rounds of the amidships cabin, and up on deck with a rush, breathing smokily in the frosty air, joking, slapping each other on the back with crude horse-play. And these men were physically just as tired—perhaps more so—than the drawn wrecks who had crawled out yesterday under the threat of a clubbing.

This morning they were to step and rig the foremast, and they were overside

before the mate had had time to issue out the inevitable ship's biscuit and water.

But they got it when they came up half an hour later, with the lines made fast and everything ready, and munched it, jesting above the chattering of their teeth, as they faced the raw wind from beyond the harbor mouth.

"James, gimme another shot o' them there truffles, *seel voo play.*"

"Might I be so polite as to offer ya a helpin' o' baked beans an' brown bread, ya clam-diggin' cod-fish ball?" thus Swift to Benton. Oscaar achieved a real triumph when he waved a tin cup of water with exaggerated delicacy and announced—

"Ay t'ink little champagne go well wit' t'e dok."

O'Connor shaded his eyes with his hand and stared at the shore where the morning mist quivered and trembled along the wharves.

"Look, would ye. It's an audience we have this mornin'."

Sure enough, the wharves were covered with little black figures, pointing and gesticulating at the schooner with its shears and derrick boom.

"Come to see how a bunch o' real sailors do it," somebody commented, and Swift, now the most eager of all, sang out—

"Come on then, you Port Mahon sogers, give 'em something to look at."

They sprang to the fall at the word, coldness and stiffness and weariness forgotten, and presently, to the creaking of blocks and the whine of taut cordage, and a gasping chorus of "Heave—ah! Heave—ah! Heave—ah!" the foremast broke from the water and began to rise, dripping, toward the rail.

"Heave—ah. Heave—ah! All you got now — all together, heave—ah! Walk away with it now! Heave—ah!"

Cre-e-e-eak! Zing! Gr-rind!

"Heave—ah! Coil down that slack, Squarehead! Heave—ah!"

And then Peterson, the deep-water sailor, raised a harsh, true voice:

"As I was awalking up Liberty Street—"

"Hay—way, and we'll blow the man down!" Benton came in surprizingly.

"A fresh young policeman I happened to meet!"

"Oh, give us some time and we'll blow the man down!" roared the chorus.

The top of the foremast slid up above them like some wet shining sea-monster, higher and higher, until presently it tilted and they held a turn and rigged a smaller tackle to swing the butt inboard.

"That does it! Easy now, slack away. Slack away! Once more! That's enough —hold her."

"Tools. Tools!" Swift danced impatiently, snapping his fingers. "How the —— are we gonna square the butt to fit the step?"

But Oscaar was equal to the occasion. He took a couple of turns of a lanyard, one around the handle, and one around the point of his knife—and behold! A crude draw knife, not much to look at and rather less to work with, but it beavered off the tough, water-soaked pine after a fashion.

"Good man," said Chadwick almost prayerfully, and he sent Peterson, O'Connor and Peace forward to rig the top of the foremast with the shrouds and stays and the throat and peak halliards.

"Ay'm talling yu always t'at's locky knife," Oscaar said with a grin, and the skipper, who had been casting frequent glances to the eastward turned impatiently.

"Hurry up with that foremast! It's going to thicken."

"It's going to thicken! Fog coming!" The word jumped the length of the deck like an electric spark, and left a tenseness in its wake. The work quickened.

"Ready forward? Ready there, Oscaar? Tally on them! Heave—ah, and walk away with it."

Slowly, steadily, an inch at a time, the top of the foremast rose while the men below panted and sweated and gripped the planking with their feet and heaved.

"Keep 'er comin'. Handsomely now!

Heave—ah! Heave—ah! Heave—ah! Snatch 'er, you hairy apes, snatch 'er. Keep a-lookin', you bohunks, you're gonna see something now!"

The top swung up. The butt tilted forward.

"Take a turn there. Take a turn an' hold 'er. Steady now! Saarenpa, Benton, Swift, get that foreboom tackle rigged and ease her over. Get below, Mr. Chadwick, and sing out when she's right over the step. All ready—slack away! Easy! Easy, —— you! What the ——'s the matter with you on the foreboom tackle? Now—let 'er come! Easy—easy—easy—ah! Now look, you bohunks, and get an eyeful."

There was a bump, a grinding. The ropes slacked off with a sound like a tired sigh.

The foremast was stepped.

"Easy as takin' a drink," Swift exulted and flexed his aching fingers and rubbed his numbed forearms, while the rest bent back and forth to ease aching backs or leaned on the rail, dizzy with the relief from the strain of hauling.

"Dead easy," they agreed.

The skipper glanced off to the east again.

"Fog banks thickening—let's go with the mainmast. Overside now, lively."

"Aye, aye, sir!"

Sore backs, muscles cramped and drawn with weariness, empty stomachs, eyes burning from little sleep—over they went, a human avalanche.

"Pass a line, willya—underneath, Squarehead. Who the —— told you you was a sailor?" "Well if you can't do it get out the way an' let somebody there that can." "Go on—t'e water ain' gon' hurt yu. Yu needin' a bat' anahow." "Aw, hang on to it." "Well, gimme some slack then, —— it!" "You—Saarenpa! What the —— d'you think I am? A submarine?"

It was a cold, wet job. They came on deck, teeth chattering, wringing the water out of their sleeves and trousers, shaking themselves like dogs after a swim.

"No rest," the skipper shouted. "All hands to the fall. Snatch 'er now! Fog's thickening, and there's got to be sail on her to-night."

"Sail it is, sir."

"Here's something'll warm you up if you're cold."

"Come on, yu—Peterson. 'Tis bane yob for big, fat man."

"Benton, what the ——'s the matter with you? Sun-struck?"

The long Cape Codder was draped over the seaward rail, staring under his hand.

"Saay! Hol' your hosses a minute. What they doin' aout there?'

It was the tone more than the words that stopped them where they stood, made them drop everything to look where his lean finger pointed.

Opposite the fort and some three miles away half a dozen boats were strung out across the harbor. Others plied between them, very busy and active.

They looked at one another, puzzled. Swift said—"Good night—they ain't fixin' to try to stop us with small boats, are they?"

Benton shook his head. He said quietly: "No. They're puttin' daown chains acrosst the channel."

"Chains—" began Swift, and stopped. There was a sudden, hard silence.

Then a cry broke from the men, a queer, screaming snarl, animal-like. They pointed to the chain-laying boats and to the foremast, with trembling fingers, and cursed and yelled filthy incoherencies at the work they had been so proud of a moment before. O'Connor whirled and collided with Peace, who hit him, and in an instant the two were fighting. Chadwick sprang in to separate them and both turned on him. Oscaar got into it too, and Saarenpa. It was sheer, senseless rage, the desire to hurt and batter something—anything.

Swift ran across the deck, shaking his fist in the skipper's face.

"You made us step the foremast! You made us step the foremast!"

Half the crew were mixed in a tangled, snarling fight by now, but Swift's scream cut through their noise.

"You made us step the foremast, —— you! You made us step the foremast! You made us step the foremast!" Over and over and over.

They drew off from one another and joined him, driven by blind instinct to find some tangible outlet for a disappointment that was past bearing.

"Chains—they got chains on us, d'you hear?" "You made us do it." "—never gonna get out now." "We could've got out in the fog. You're the captain, why don't you do something?" "You made us do all that work. You said we could get out." "You made us step the foremast!" "Chains—"

All the fabric of discipline was crashing to the ground under the shock of their disappointment. Hawke stood there, his hands in his coat pockets, eyes narrowed a little, impassive, while their rage and grief surged around him noisily.

It seemed as if he must do something. Curse, hit somebody—something! It was his hard indifference that maddened them. They wanted some sign that he was aware of the calamity. And they yelled and raged and swore. Until somebody hit him.

Probably no one knew exactly who did it, but they saw the blood start from his mouth, and that gave them pause. They fell back a step—startled—waiting to see what he would do.

He did nothing. If he had struck back, if he had shrunk away, even if he had spoken, they were ready to fling themselves on him, pull him down, beat and kick him insensible. But he did nothing. He stood there as he had stood before, unexcited, unafraid, hard, impassive, with the blood running down his chin and his eyes narrowed and thoughtful.

And then a curious thing happened. The men began to look at one another, covertly and ashamed, and then to sidle apart by twos and threes until he was left alone.

Chadwick, with a catch at his breath, thought:

"How does he do it?" and then, "It's because he can do it that he can handle them. They can't make him out. He doesn't go to pieces the way they do, and they can't understand him. And so he's got them where he wants them, all the time."

The skipper turned and walked toward the cabin companion, and now there was a hint of a sag to his shoulders and a little muscle at the corner of his eye twitched curiously.

Chadwick thought:

"He's human like the rest. He's just as sick as they are but he doesn't let himself go. They expected him to fight, and when he didn't it knocked 'em off their balance, because they were all set for something else."

He glanced forward. Swift sat on a coil of rope, with his head in his hands. Benton leaned against the useless shears, staring toward the harbor mouth where the boats from the fort plied back and forth across the channel, setting out the chains that cut the *Bering* off from the open sea. The others lounged about the deck dejectedly. The sun was setting, and the fog that should have hid their escape rolled in from the east.

He thought:

"The Russians expected us to rush the guard, and they were ready for that. They didn't expect us to sit tight and saw our way out, and so we got this far. What do they expect us to do now? Stay and wait for the cruiser, perhaps, or surrender, or take to the swamps? Or try to cut the chains, maybe. That's no good—they'll be guarded."

He stared absently at the lights of Petropavlovsk, beginning to glow palely in the gathering twilight, and there was a crease between his eyes.

"Must be something they haven't figured on."

The main-boom creaked forlornly between its shears, and the slackened hoisting gear rubbed the rail. Forward somebody said, "Well, I'd pretty near as lief get hung as go to the mines," and another said dully, "Shut up, you —— fool."

Chadwick drew a long breath, and disappeared down the after companion. There was one thing they wouldn't expect.

CHAPTER XXI

EBB TIDE AND FOG

GRAY fog rolling in from the sea swallowed the fort in the gathering darkness. It slid across the harbor and hung quivering over the wharves. It made misty halos of the twinkling lights of the town and then swirling inland blotted them out altogether. And it entirely hid a small boat that slid along the wharves with its oar-locks muffled in sennit.

The boat slipped under a long wharf and edged carefully toward its shoreward end. The man in the bow made it fast and stepped out. The two others followed him.

There was a hasty, whispered conference among the weed-hung piles. Then two of them set out side by side up the dark main street, and the third followed at about ten feet. He was a small man, dressed in the gray, too-large coat and the flat fatigue cap of a Russian soldier, and he carried a military rifle with the bayonet fixed.

Now and again there were footfalls and a dim shape passed them, muffled in mist and darkness. The only light came from the pale square of an occasional unshuttered window. Once all three stopped and flattened themselves against a wall while with a heavy tramp and a rattle of accoutrements a patrol of soldiers passed down the narrow street.

They waited until the last footfall died away and then held on as before.

The windows of the governor's house glowed yellow in the gloom. Under the hanging lantern in the portico the governor's *dvornik* lounged and kicked his heels against the flagging and wished that it were ten o'clock so he could lock up the house and go to bed. Only God, who sent the cold fog, knew why the governor should sit inside at his dinner as warm as midday, while a poor devil of a *dvornik* wriggled his shoulders inside his wadded coat and blew on his fingers and stamped his feet outside. If he could only have been Feodor now, and wait on the governor in the warm, lamplighted dining-room. But there was Maria. He shivvered a little. If he had had to be Feodor and have a wife like Maria—no, God was good after all. Life had its compensations.

The bell at the gate tinkled. Somebody was coming up the path. Who could be coming now, when all the world knew that this was the governor's dinner hour? Somebody of consequence, evidently. Colonel Guradanoff from the fort, perhaps. Nobody else would dare.

He drew himself up in the portico and bowed low from the waist as two forms appeared through the mist, and then straightened with an angry snort as they resolved themselves into a pair of ragged, unshaven vagabonds, who came to rest in the fringe of lantern light and regarded him sullenly.

Then he saw the soldier behind them with his bayonet, and his eyes lighted with curiosity and anticipation, for he was an old *dvornik*, grown gray in the governor's service in a place where nothing ever happened, and he liked a little excitement and a bit of gossip as well as anybody.

But it does not do for the *dvornik* of a governor to unbend too readily. He composed his features into a decent frown before he demanded his business of the guard.

In very simple Russian the little soldier humbly petitioned to be allowed to bring his prisoners, two very desperate characters off the American sealer, whom he had captured after a terrific struggle, before His Excellency.

The *dvornik* puffed out his cheeks and became very thoughtful and official indeed. It was impossible at the moment, of course—out of the question. His Excellency was at dinner and could by no means be disturbed over the trifling matter of two seal-poachers. Let the guard report to him as to how they had been

taken, and he would report the matter to His Excellency, after which they would see.

The prisoners stirred uneasily and then stood with heads hanging, hard and sullen. The little sentry launched into a rambling narrative that seemed to have neither beginning nor end.

In the meantime the *dvornik*, hands behind his back in a copy of the governor's best official manner, came down the steps and subjected them to an inspection.

A hard pair, undoubtedly—a very hard pair. The little one, now, with his broad, battered face with the nose dinted in, three weeks' growth of beard— Disgusting! And his feet wrapped in rags instead of shoes! And the tall one was not much better. He stepped a little nearer to get a better look.

Something cold and sharp pricked the back of his neck. He stiffened and drew in his breath slowly, with a hissing sound. And he stood very still.

"All right, Saarenpa—tell him to keep quiet. Tell him nothing'll happen so long as he doesn't try anything. Have him lead the way to the governor. What's he say?"

"He's a-say'n' some prayer, sir."

"Oh! Well, tell him to pray as he walks—and to start walking. You go behind him, Saarenpa, and keep that bayonet just touching the middle of his back, just enough to keep his mind on it. Let's go."

His Excellency had finished the *bortsch* and the broiled salmon steak. He had just picked up the carving knife with a sigh of anticipation and was preparing to sink it in a roast leg of lamb. He glanced up with a frown of irritation at the sound of feet in the passage.

His *dvornik* appeared, walking stiffly, and behind him a small, very dirty soldier with a rifle.

"Ha!" began the governor, and then stopped short, because the rifle instead of coming to present arms, which was proper, swung down and covered his well padded abdomen.

"Don't move," advised the soldier as two others appeared behind him.

They were lean, hard, ragged, and entirely purposeful looking, those other two. The taller stepped across to the door to the kitchen, and bolted it. The other held a knife at the throat of the quivering *dvornik*.

The governor's jaw dropped. He clutched the edge of the table. It flashed across his mind that these were Americans from that accursed seal-poacher, and that Americans, besides being insane, have no decent respect for authority whatever. He also remembered with horrible clearness that the last time he had seen these men he had promised to hang them. Men who are going to be hanged are not usually particular what they do.

He went gray and half rose from the table, then sank back at a significant movement of the rifle in the hands of the little soldier, whom he now saw was not a soldier at all but a man he remembered without enthusiasm. A man who would say such things to a governor would be likely to do anything.

Meanwhile the taller of the two sat down at his right, took a plate and calmly cut himself a generous slice of the roast lamb. He said:

"Pull up, Oscaar. Saarenpa, I'll take the rifle and give you a chance in a minute."

The governor's eyes bulged. He said earnestly—

"That is robbery on top of murder, and very serious."

As the tall man did not understand him he continued to eat. He said:

"Tell him I'm mate of the *Bering* out there, and I want those chains out of the channel tonight. Try some gravy, Oscaar, and shove that bottle over here. What's he say, Saarenpa?" he added with his mouth full.

"He'sa say, 'No.' He'sa say captain from dot fort, he'sa putt'n' dots a chain down. No can move 'um."

"Does he? Try some of this stuff, Oscaar. Brandy, I think. Well, tell him that's tough luck for him, because we're going out on the ebb—that'll be about two o'clock—and if those chains don't

come out before then, this place'll be short one fat governor. Tell him I don't care who put 'em there, but I know who's going to have 'em taken away."

The governor's fingers picked at the table-cloth. His eyes were on the muzzle of Saarenpa's rifle.

"He'sa say dotsa no good to kill 'um. He'sa say no good 'tall. Chain gon' stay dere all tam' yus' da same."

Chadwick paused to gulp down a good-sized swallow of brandy and set the bottle down with a thump.

"——'s delight— Hasn't he got the idea yet? When we go out, he's going with us—tell him that." He leaned forward and tapped the table with a long forefinger. "And tell him this—that the minute our keel touches one of those chains I'll hang him to—to the main gaff, I guess. Think it'll hold him, Oscaar?"

Saarenpa translated. The governor's head seemed to sink between his fat shoulders, and his face went a shade grayer. But he was not ready to give up yet.

"He'sa say dot street, dotsa be full soldiers. No can' get 'um back on sheep. No can. Soldiers catch'n' us. He'sa say anahow he'sa be governor. Nobodee'sa dast to hurt governor."

"Hm! So that's the way he feels about it. Well, tell him this—if he thinks we can't get him back to the ship just let him give one yell and see what happens to him. And we're due to hang anyhow on his own say-so. Tell him we believe that, and ask him if he thinks a dead governor's going to make any difference."

His Excellency swallowed with difficulty. It seemed to him that these men were in the mood to kill, and he was a good judge of men and moods. He glanced from the muzzle of the rifle to Oscaar, stuffing himself stolidly with roast lamb and gravy, and washing down huge mouthfuls with gulps of a Napoleon brandy that had tickled the palates of kings. He looked at Chadwick, who met his stare with eyes something the color and quality of gray steel. He had no way of knowing that the lean reckless young man, a little flushed with his brandy, who tilted back in his chair with so much assurance, had devoted the better part of a misspent youth to proving that two pairs beat a full-house, but he thought he saw something there that made him drop his shoulders and throw out his hands, palms up.

"READ that, Saarenpa," Chadwick took the freshly penned note, addressed to Colonel Guradanoff at the fort, and tossed it over to the little Finn. "Well, pretend to read it anyhow. He doesn't know the difference."

Saarenpa wiped the back of his hand across his mouth, grinned, and scanned it painstakingly.

"Ay guess dotsa aw-right."

"Well, I hope for his own sake he's made it strong enough. Tell him to have his man here—" he jerked a thumb toward the *dvornik*, who promptly began another prayer—"have him take it to the fort. It'll only take one look at him to convince 'em the letter's no fake. He's about the worst scared man I ever saw. Had enough, Saarenpa? Come on, then."

With the pallid governor between them, Chadwick and Oscaar walked unmolested out of the house and into the street. Saarenpa brought up the rear. To the casual observer he might have been the governor's orderly.

But as they turned out at the gate Oscaar said in his gentle, high-pitched voice:

"Tal him t'is bane loky knife, Saarenpa. Tal him when ay get nine notches ay am finding million dollar, maybe—and ay yust got to get seven more."

And so they went down the main street of Petropavlovsk, shivering a little in the thick, chill dark. Twice misty forms passed them at arm's length, and Chadwick tightened his grip warningly on the governor's arm. Once a door was flung open ahead and a drunken figure reeled out in a shaft of yellow light, but the door slammed and the man disappeared—although they could hear him singing tunelessly for a little before he lurched into a side street and was gone.

And then when they had almost reached

the wharf a man with a lantern swung around a corner and all but collided with them.

He raised his lantern with a startled grunt. The governor stiffened with a little startled yelp, as a man may who has suddenly had an eighth of an inch of steel jabbed into the fleshy part of his leg.

The man with the lantern stared. Then he caught sight of the little soldier five paces in the rear and he remembered his manners and bowed low from the waist. The three passed on, his Excellency walking very stiffly. Chadwick looked back and saw the man with the lantern still staring after them curiously.

Then they were under the wharf, and Saarenpa was casting off the painter of their boat. And then, very quietly, they pushed off and slipped away into the fog.

THEY had brought the mainmast aboard, but it still remained to step and rig it, and to fit the sails in some sort of fashion before day, and there were nine men to do it.

Chadwick toiled with the rest and, in the long, dark hours that followed, the events just past mingled and floated together in his head like the sequence of a half-remembered dream. The dinner he had eaten, the brandy he had drunk, the misty streets, the dimly seen, incredulous faces at the rail when his boat shot under the schooner's counter and he called for a line to hoist his prisoner aboard—none of them had the slightest kin to reality.

The real things were here; to toil frantically at a task that had no end, to haul at ropes and strain at weights and tug at sodden canvas until he burst his finger-ends and wrapped them in a rag torn from his shirt and went at it again, to sweat and pant and freeze and labor in a cold dark hell filled with hurrying forms that swarmed and jostled and stumbled and cursed while a hard, tired demon with a muckle hit them wearily and set them to new and impossible tasks.

Or perhaps none of it was real and he would wake up presently in his stateroom aboard his yacht. He must have a yacht, he thought, or he must have had one. Sometime—somewhere—it didn't matter. Nothing mattered but the pain in his hands, and that pain was the one real thing in a fluid world. Real pain.

He watched them work, pulling, straining, making knots, unravelling tangles. Clever machines, ingenious, with real pain that kept them from drifting into a hazy illusion like everything else. And that was clever, too, because it was imperative for some vague reason not worth remembering that they should go on, lashing, twisting, tying—they were fitting the canvas now—jumping from knot to knot. Real hands. Real pain—

A thin-drawn voice like a voice on a telephone said:

"All ready. All hands stand by to weigh anchor."

All hands—hands—

He looked up and saw the sails, misty in the darkness, and heard the suck of the ebb at the mooring chain. A sort of stale sanity came back to him.

The anchor came in with an interminable clack and rattle. The headsails filled—the fore and main sails—ropes creaking and slipping in the dark—canvas slatting. The *Bering* moved off, slowly and clumsily, like a wounded beetle, but she did move and answer her helm.

He knew when they passed the fort because there was a yellow glow that cut through the dark—the searchlight—and a frightened small-boat scuttered out from under their bows. Also there was a sound that was half a snarl and half a wail from the poop, and the beam rested for an instant on a little fat man with blue-white quivering cheeks who raised his arms convulsively as the dark shut down again.

He heard somebody say—

"They musta took the chains out."

It was a moment before he could remember what chains. He had almost forgotten the governor, too.

But others had not. Oscaar showed him a pair of shining shoes.

"T'ey yust may taste, sir," he said with

prideful satisfaction. "And Saarenpa iss getting nice goldt watch, too."

Then they cleared the point, and he felt the schooner lift and plunge to the running roll of the ocean and he knew that that they were in the open sea.

Things were very hazy after that. He remembered standing by the tackles with the ship hove-to and putting His Excellency into a small boat, and he remembered that Swift stood near, snarling, because he wanted to throw him overside and let him swim for it.

"The water ain' no colder for him than it was for us is it? Is it?"

But he had no recollection of telling Swift that he had always wanted to kill him and now he was going to or of staggering after him with a muckle which the skipper took away from him.

Later a frantic hail from forward startled him out of a waking dream to see a dark wedge towering above them, trailing wisps of fog, and for a dead still instant he knew that it was just a chance one way or the other. Then a long gray wall slid past, lighted with port-holes, and a whiskered, brass-bound being with a startled face leaned over her rail and cursed them fluently in Russian.

"That," remarked the skipper, as everybody breathed again, "was the cruiser from Okhotsk. She'll be charging out after us again shortly, to catch us before we get into American waters. And in the meantime we'll be in the last place she'll think of looking—on our way back to the Commander Islands."

Chadwick was too sleepy to care, but he heard somebody make a startled protest, and the skipper's answer:

"Certainly the Commander Islands. I never brought home an empty ship yet—and besides, I've got business there."

CHAPTER XXII

THE EMPTY HOLD

ALL the next day and for four days after that the *Bering* wallowed crazily across the gray, crested seas, rigged in a fashion to break a seaman's heart, and answering her helm like a hard-mouthed plow-horse. Meanwhile her crew slept and woke to nibble digustedly at the eternal moldy biscuit and dozed again. Gradually as the hours passed sodden muscles began to get back a little of the snap and spring that the past weeks had drained out of them, eyes became clear and the old clogging weariness fell away.

On the morning of the fifth day they sighted land. No more than a low-lying fog bank on the horizon, but by noon the *Bering* was skirting a rocky coast half seen through a light mist, and the boom of the surf was in their ears.

For an hour or more they felt their way from headland to high headland, while the skipper studied the wet cliffs with an abstracted frown. Then, after a time, his face cleared, and he nodded and sent Oscaar aloft.

"Keep your eyes peeled," he instructed, "especially inshore. And sing out when you see anything."

Chadwick was standing not far away. He glanced toward the skipper, a little puzzled. Hawke let his eye run over the scarred deck, the splintered rails, and the make-shift rigging.

"She's not much better than a wreck as she stands," he remarked sadly. "It's hardly worth the trouble to take her into port. And empty—"

Chadwick's look changed from puzzlement to astonishment, tinged with alarm. There was something in the tone—

It came to him in that instant that a man's reason might become unhinged by the strain of the last few weeks. An absurd idea, of course, but things like that have happened. Suppose, for instance, he took it into his head to pile them up on a reef somewhere in that cold, forsaken fog.

"And I'm the mate," he thought uneasily. "Oh, be —— to that! It's absurd!"

"She is empty, of course, sir," he agreed politely. "But that's what we're here for, to fill her. Isn't it?"

"In a way perhaps." There was a cold

glint in the man's eye that was disquieting.

"Your education's coming on," he remarked with sudden irrelevance. "Poaching, jail-breaking, kidnaping—it won't take much to round it out. Well, we'll see what we can do."

"What d'you mean, sir?" Chadwick asked the question directly at the risk of being thought stupid. This was no time for beating about the bush.

"Piracy," said the skipper calmly.

Chadwick looked at him. He thought:

"He does mean it. He is stark, raving crazy. And I'm the mate!"

Aloud he said: "Look here, sir! I wish you'd tell me what you're getting at!"

Hawke turned with a sudden energy that took the breath out of Chadwick. His eyes glittered coldly. He said—

"Well, if my guess is good, it won't be a thousand years before you find out, Mister."

He returned abruptly and began to study the shore line again and Chadwick tried unhappily to make up his mind what to do. He had just come to the conclusion that he would make some pretext to get the skipper below and have it out with him there, out of hearing of the crew, when the fog thinned a trifle and Oscaar's voice floated down from the mast-head:

"T'ere iss a schooner in t'e bay, sir. An' by ——, sir, it iss t'e *Kamloops!*"

There was a moment when everything was so still that he could hear the quick pounding of his own pulses. Then Hawke let out a long breath like a sigh.

He said—

"I thought I knew his habits!" And a wave of excitement swept the deck.

CHAPTER XXIII

FIVE DEAD MEN

GROPING blindly through the white smother, invisible, soundless except for the soft hiss of water overside and the whine and plop of the lead, the *Bering* crept around the point under jib and shortened mainsail and stole up the bay.

"Fourteen—twelve and a half—twelve —nine—" the word of the soundings was passed up the deck in a whisper. At "six" the order came, "Hard a-lee! Not a sound now!"

The blocks had been newly greased and muffled while they waited outside for the fog to thicken. Except for a pattering of reef-points, ghostly under the heavy pall of mist, the *Bering* came about with practically no noise at all.

"Hear that?"

Chadwick leaned at the break of the poop and listened. It seemed to him that he caught the clank of a chain, and again, a slow *cre-e-eak* like a boom straining at its lashings.

"That's her," the skipper nodded. "Listen—get it? Pass the word! No shooting till I give the signal. Then one volley and everybody over, all at once. We've got mighty little ammunition."

The men were at the rail, braced and waiting, hands gripping knife or muckle or rifle, knees bent, brows knit, straining through the smother.

Soft hiss of water overside, slow, laboring breaths, taken between clenched teeth—then a whining voice out of the fog ahead:

"Nah then! What the —— d'yer think yer doin'—tyin' up a dorg?"

A snicker ran along the *Bering's* rail, and a sharp whisper cursed them into silence.

Chadwick glanced down the line for the hundredth time. He saw the skipper on the poop with a small-boat anchor on a line for grappling and thought:

"He'll never get a chance to throw it. We must have passed them."

He strained his ears and fingered the bolt of his rifle. He had a sudden fear that he had forgotten to load it. He was afraid to open the breech on account of the noise.

Benton touched his arm and pointed. He saw a gray shadow which rapidly resolved itself into the bow of a schooner. He could see the red rust streaked where her chain ran through the hawse holes and for a moment he held his breath in the

fear that they were going to collide head-on.

Then the bow slid past. Along the rail lungs filled. Toes curled against the planking. There was a man in blue overalls sitting on the forecastle head with his back to them. He made Chadwick think of the yard man who used to rake the lawns of the house in Salem. He thought, "Poor old Magee—I wonder what's become of him?" and at the same time he felt a queer shock of surprize that he should have remembered the man's name when he couldn't remember whether the front door had a fan-light or a rectangle. He could see the house plainly, too, all but that detail. It was irritating.

They crawled past the forecastle head, past the foremast. They were hardly more than an arm's length apart, broadside to broadside. And still no one saw them. He felt like a banjo string, screwed to the snapping point.

A thickset man with an oilskin sou'wester, leaning against the rail, turned his head casually and glanced toward them.

Chadwick saw a red face with a pair of startled eyes that stared directly into his own. The man's amazement was so comic that he wanted to laugh. He saw his mouth open to shout, saw his chest fill— It was an incredible length of time.

There was a shrill whistle from the poop—a crash. Flame spurted from the *Bering's* rail. The red-faced man in the sou'wester seemed to wither away. Men sprang up from everywhere on the *Kamloops'* deck, running, stumbling, colliding with each other. There was a shock, and a slither and grind as the schooners came together. Chadwick thought—

"He must have put the wheel hard over."

Benton's long legs flew over the rail. Chadwick must have followed, because he found himself clinched with a man in a blue sweater, who kept saying, "'Ere now! 'Ere now!" until Chadwick brought his knee up into his groin, saw the man's face twist in a stiff spasm of pain and felt him let go his hold. He hit another man under the jaw with his rifle butt, and after that he was jammed into a packed, swearing mob between the foremast and the eyes, with no chance to swing his gun or even get his fist loose.

Then it was push and shove and heave and strain and slip and stumble, and his feet wouldn't hold on the slippery deck and his arms were cramped to his sides, while a thin man with a scar from the corner of his eye to his jaw glared at him with his face only an inch or two away. He had an insane notion to bite him and gave it up because the man looked dirty. He grinned at the idea, and the man said:

"Larf then! I'll 'ave yer larfin' on the other side o' yer —— fyce!"

And so they pushed and swore and kicked at each other's shins until the packed mass burst and they reeled down the deck by twos and threes, slipping and sliding and tripping and battering each other—a roaring, grunting, yelling foot and fist and club and knife battle, since no one dared shoot when friend and foe were so tangled in the fog that no one knew which was which.

Chadwick lost his rifle in a jam by the mainmast, where he picked up a muckle instead and hauled Swift from beneath the boots of a trampling mob.

"—— of a place for a little man," the hunter panted. "If I could see to shoot—"

Up and down the deck it raged, around the masts and under the booms. Chadwick picked out a red-shirted *Kamloops* man and laid his head open with a blow, whirled and jabbed another in the face. No time to see what became of them—hit your man and get on to another. Once he saw Hawke, hard-pressed by four, with his back to the rail, but before he could get there he had his hands full with two who came at him together around the galley. He kicked one in the stomach and lost the other in rush of *Kamloops* men who fled up the deck before Oscaar and Peterson and Saarenpa.

The little Finn had the bayonet from the Russian rifle and was using it with a peculiar underhand motion. Peterson had picked up a rusty hatchet somewhere.

O'Connor rocketed off the poop with

two of them behind, and nearly bowled him over. Chadwick hit one in the shoulder and heard the bone snap and saw him sag against the rail. There were swift pictures, glimpsed hurriedly between blows and stamped on his mind—Hawke picking a man and splitting his head open with a precision that was almost dainty; Oscaar scuttling past like a weasel, his knife dripping red; Peterson with his hatchet, hot and panting; Peace, his lips drawn back, teeth showing, hitting toe to toe with a man in a battered golf cap; a blur of arms and legs that was Benton, rolling in the scuppers with a figure in oilskins.

He heard a muffled *wop, wop* and saw Swift on the forecastle head shooting overside, and some part of the back of his brain reasoned that part of the *Kamloops'* crew must have been ashore at the rookeries, which explained why the odds were not so heavy as he had expected.

And gradually the crew of the *Bering* began to get the better of it. Presently they were entirely on the offensive in spite of the fact that they had been outnumbered at the start. It was due partly to the effect of surprize but principally to the hard recklessness they had acquired in the past few weeks and their trick of driving head or feet first into any tangle they saw and battering their way to the other side. Then, too, the Englishmen were fighting leaderless. No one had seen Billiter.

The thing was over as suddenly as it had begun. A *Kamloops* man racing up the deck hard-pressed by Peterson and O'Connor, threw away his club and shouted for quarter. In an instant the cry became general.

Hawke heard it and crashed into a tangle by the cabin companion, throwing men left and right.

"All right—they've had enough. Drop it, you—drop it, I said! Cease firing in the bow there! Drop it!" He plunged forward to the forecastle head and knocked up the muzzle of Swift's rifle. "Quit—you heard me! Let that man alone, O'Connor."

"Line up the prisoners amidships, Mr. Chadwick, and see that they're not hurt so long as they keep quiet." He cupped his hands. "You in the small boats out there, come in, one at a time, on the starboard quarter. And keep your hands away from your rifles. Come on."

Chadwick took charge of the men on deck. They came, stolid or snarling according to temperament, rounded up by the *Bering's* crew, and presently others began to come from forward as the boats came in.

One of the last to come was Captain James Billiter, shuffling along the deck with his shoulders sagged forward. His cap was off and under his close-cropped hair Chadwick noticed that the skin of his scalp had twitched into a curious ridged V with the point between his eyes.

There was a snarl from the *Bering's* men as he appeared. For a moment it looked as if they would rush him then and there. But the skipper came behind, and, although Swift's rifle was thrown carelessly over the crook of his arm, there was a look of warning on his face that held them back.

Billiter quickened his pace, with his eyes averted, and dodged down the cabin companion. The skipper paused to say:

"Keep close watch on 'em, Mister. And see that there's no disorder." Then he followed Billiter.

Things were quiet enough on deck. Now that it was all over the men seemed to be suffering a reaction from the nervous strain of the past hour or so. There was no jubilation. They lounged and spat and nursed bruises and talked in low tones, while the booms dripped and the sheer-strakes pounded and cleared to the ground swell. A few stared curiously at the twisted bodies that lay about the deck—five in all, and all *Kamloops* men, for, except for Peace, who had a broken arm, and Benton with a knife wound in his shoulder, the *Bering's* crew had taken only minor cuts.

Swift grumbled that the skipper had taken his rifle away from him to keep him from shooting Billiter and the inevitable,

aimless argument sprang up between him and Benton. Not that the latter had any objection to Billiter's being shot, but he must be arguing about something while Oscaar bound up his wound. Now and then one of the prisoners spoke or groaned or cursed, whereupon one of the guards said, "Shut up, —— you," tonelessly and with no rancor.

Chadwick felt depressed and let down—he had no idea why. The only one who showed any particular satisfaction was Oscaar.

He showed the mate his knife, still wet and red.

"Ay'm getting two more notches," he said gently. "So t'at's nice." He wiped the blade on his sleeve, nodded, smiled shyly and sheathed it. O'Connor shivered and crossed himself.

THE conference in the cabin ended. Billiter came on deck, sullen and furious, but no longer terrified, and the crew stared at him like hungry dogs at a withheld bone. Hawke followed, impassive as ever—but he still had the rifle.

"All the *Kamloops* men over into the *Bering*," he ordered. "Lively now—jump! You there, in the red shirt, step out if you don't want a bat in the jaw. Shove along!"

Under the rifles of the *Bering's* crew they went sullenly enough, but helpless. Billiter watched the embarkation with murder in his eyes.

"You'll be sorry for this," he snarled. "There's w'ys—"

The skipper smiled.

"All right. Better get started yourself, hadn't you?"

"There's lawrs'll tyke care o' you, my Yankee pirate. That's what it is—piracy on the 'igh seas."

"There's a squarehead in my crowd," Hawke said pleasantly, "who's got a knife with notches on it. When he gets nine he says he's going to find a million dollars. He's crazy to get 'em. Better start."

Still the other hesitated.

"By —— if this 'ere was British waters—"

"But it isn't. It's in Russian territorial limits. Better get started now, and look alive. If my crew get their hands on you God only knows how you will look. Step out!"

And Billiter stepped.

Chadwick watched the *Bering* disappear into the fog to a salvo of threats delivered by her new owner. He turned to Hawke with a grin, but there was uneasiness behind it.

"Look here, sir. How d'you think we're going to get away with this?"

"We did get away with it, didn't we?"

"Well—but it is piracy, you know, sir. He has us there. You can't make piracy stick these days."

"Piracy? Not at all," Hawke corrected gravely. "It's a trade. Look here."

Chadwick scanned the paper.

"For the title to the schooner *Bering* and other considerations—"

He handed it back with some misgivings.

"A bill of sale. But you can't make that stick in court. He's got plenty of witnesses, and it would be simple enough to prove—"

"Ah, probably it would. But you see Billiter's got his living to make in sealing and there are things about these proceedings that might go all right in court, but which won't go in the sealing fleet. He might get his ship back—probably would—and he might get us into a lot of trouble. But think what would happen to him the next time he got into the fleet if the story came out. I'll bet he's thinking of it.

"A court might believe him," Hawke added, "but the fleet'll believe me. That's the advantage of an unblemished reputation."

Chadwick grinned joyously now, surrendering himself to the thrill of the thing.

"I wish you'd tell me one thing, sir," he said. "What was the 'valuable consideration' that induced Billiter to sign that bill of sale?"

The skipper was entirely grave.

"I think the most valuable," he said, "was my promise not to turn him over to the crew. When the men are through cleaning up have them get sail on her, Mr. Chadwick. We'll shove off while the fog holds for San Francisco and a big pay-day."

CHAPTER XXIV

PETER CHADWICK

BOXES bumped. Barrels and crates banged and clattered. A stream of stevedores ran their trucks up the gang plank and dumped their loads and ran them down again while the sweating crew toiled and grunted and swore and shot the stuff down the hatchway.

Chadwick watched the orderly confusion with an abstracted crease between his eyes. He was still a little bewildered at the speed with which things had happened in the week since they had reached San Francisco. He was telling himself for the hundredth time that what he was doing was the sane, conservative thing, that it wasn't everybody who could fall into the opening a classmate had found for him in an old established bond house, in short, that he was a decidedly fortunate young man.

The skipper had just finished telling him so, and was saying—

"Well, good luck to you—though if you put the guts into selling bonds that you did into being a mate you won't need luck."

Chadwick jerked his head around. The skipper was not given to praise.

"You think I made a good mate?"

"I do. You've got a lot to learn, but I'll give you my O. K. any time you want it."

"But you won't let me ship over."

Hawke frowned.

"We've had that all out before, haven't we? You've had a streak of luck this trip and made a little pot of money. Well, now is the time to quit. Oh, I know you'd like to go again. There's a lot of excitement to it, although that's over too. The *Kamloops* stays on her own side of the line from now on. I'm cured. But you're cut out for something better than the mate of a sealer, even a strictly legal one. But I'll miss you."

Chadwick said slowly—

"I suppose you're right, sir."

"Of course I'm right," the other interrupted with sudden energy. "Look here, son, you've got a name that means something. Chadwick! Why there wasn't a port from Salem to Calcutta that didn't know the Chadwick house-flag once. And let me tell you it meant something to be a master under that flag. My father was master in a Chadwick ship," he explained in answer to a startled look. "I guess I never told you."

"No," Chadwick said soberly, "you never told me." He sensed something in the skipper's tone that he had never heard there before.

The latter was going on.

"That was why I was so dead set to have you that day in Yokohama. I wanted to see whether there was any of that Chadwick stuff left." He smiled as he glanced at the well cut tweeds, the soft gray shirt with the collar pin, and the new English brogues. "Well, nobody'd take you for a hard-boiled mate as you stand, but I guess the Chadwick stuff's still there. And it's too good stuff to be thrown away on being the mate of a sealer. You go into the office, son, and teach 'em that the Chadwicks are as good as they ever were. You've got a good job with a future. You're lucky."

"Yes, sir," Chadwick agreed, but without any great enthusiasm. "I suppose I am."

"Of course you are. And you've made a decent little stake out of the trip so that if a chance comes along to get into something good you'll be able to take it."

Chadwick sighed.

"I guess you're right, sir," he agreed a little absently. He was watching the work forward now with a crease between his eyes. One of the hands seemed to be having difficulties with a barrel and a

rope. He frowned and added, "I don't think so much of this new lot you've shipped."

"Oh, they'll do. We'll lick 'em into shape on the way to Japan and polish 'em off on the grounds. You won't know 'em this time next year."

"Have you signed on a new mate yet, sir?"

"I've got Farrel and O'Day looking for somebody for me. When do you start work?"

"Huh? Oh, a week from Thursday, I think he said. Look at that fool!"

"Well, good luck to you. We'll miss you. Come down and see us before we sail."

Chadwick said very slowly:

"My great-grandfather started apprentice. He didn't have any interest in his first ship."

"Times were different then, son. Now look here, you've landed on your feet in a good job. You won't want to walk a wet deck all your life—"

But Chadwick was half-way up the deck, striding purposefully.

"Here, you. Where the —— did you learn seamanship — in a drug-store? Oscaar! Come here and show this man his work. Now watch. There! That's the way it's done on this ship, and don't you forget it."

Oscaar smiled shyly.

"Ay'm sorry yu leavin' us, sir. But t'at's elegant clo'es yu gettin'."

"Leaving you? How the —— can I leave you when we have to ship a farmer like that as an able seaman?"

"T'en yu stayin', sir?" The broad, battered face split in a delighted grin. "Oh my, t'at's nice."

"D'you think I'm going to fight for a ship like this and then turn her over to a gang of plow-hands? Of course I'm staying."

He turned and strode back up the deck, and for the first time today there was a swing to his shoulders and a snap to his walk.

"Look here, sir," he said. "Look here! My great-grandfather wasn't too proud of his name to be a mate and a darn good one—nor my grandfather either. There's never been a Chadwick yet who couldn't walk a wet deck, and there's never been one who had to end up doing it. There's going to be a partnership formed here shortly. Chadwick and Hawke, or whatever you want to call it, to organize the sealing industry. Or else it's going to be just Chadwick. Take your choice."

There was a hint of a flush on his high cheek bones, and his eyes were very steady and very level.

Hawke smiled. Then he shrugged and held out his hand.

"I think when you look like that I'd rather have you with me than against me," he said. "If you can show me a way to do it—"

"I'll show you a dozen," Chadwick told him impatiently. "Wait till I get out of these clothes—"

Oscaar watched them disappear down the cabin companion with a grin.

"Ay t'ink we gon' have locky trip," he murmured as if to himself, and then, to the new hand, "T'at's t'e mate. If yu doin' your work gude yu gettin' on fine wit' him. But better yu remember what he iss tallin' yu. If yu gettin' slack 'bout t'ings he iss a wooluf!"

THE END

The Camp-Fire

A free-to-all Meeting-Place *for* Readers, Writers *and* Adventurers

OUR Camp-Fire came into being May 5, 1912, with our June issue, and since then its fire has never died down. Many have gathered about it and they are of all classes and degrees, high and low, rich and poor, adventurers and stay-at-homes, and from all parts of the earth. Some whose voices we used to know have taken the Long Trail and are heard no more, but they are still memories among us, and new voices are heard, and welcomed.

We are drawn together by a common liking for the strong, clean things of out-of-doors, for word from the earth's far places, for man in action instead of caged by circumstance. The spirit *of adventure lives in all men; the rest is chance.*

But something besides a common interest holds us together. Somehow a real comradeship has grown up among us. Men can not thus meet and talk together without growing into friendlier relations; many a time does one of us come to the rest for facts and guidance; many a close personal friendship has our Camp-Fire built up between two men who had never met; often has it proved an open sesame between strangers in a far land.

Perhaps our Camp-Fire is even a little more. Perhaps it is a bit of leaven working gently among those of different station toward the fuller and more human understanding and sympathy that will some day bring to man the real democracy and brotherhood he seeks. Few indeed are the agencies that bring together on a friendly footing so many and such great extremes as here. And we are numbered by the hundred thousand now.

If you are come to our Camp-Fire for the first time and find you like the things we like, join us and find yourself very welcome. There is no obligation except ordinary manliness, no forms or ceremonies, no dues, no officers, no anything except men and women gathered for interest and friendliness. Your desire to join makes you a member.

AT OUR December 31 Camp-Fire G. D. Wyman, in connection with the strange places in which our magazine is found, told us very briefly of another Camp-Fire comrade's actual adventure with Mexican bandits. I wrote asking whether he wouldn't give us the full story and he was good enough to comply. Not only that but in order to do so he seems to have postponed a fishing-trip for the sake of Camp-Fire. Our thanks and appreciation go to him.

Graystone Hotel,
Fort Myers, Florida.

Dear Mr. Hoffman: Received your note a few moments ago, relative to "more about Mr. Knight." Kingfish are reported off Captiva and Sanibel Islands, and I was just ready to jump aboard. Expect some rare sport before tomorrow night. But I am sketching the Knight situation, gladly, regretting that I did not take notes on the affair at the time, being familiar with every foot of the territory and knowing personally everybody involved in it. Just who the bandit leader was, I never learned. The Mexican officials merely shrugged their shoulders and said "*Quien sabe?*"—G. D. Wyman.

The account of our Camp-Fire comrade's adventure follows:

For practically two years, beginning with the resumption of work on the main line of the Sud-Pacifico de Mexico, beginning at Tepic and with the eastern terminus at La Quemada, in the State of Jalisco, Mexico, engineering residences were safe. Even through the hectic months of the Huerta-Pablo Gonzales-Escobel revolution, during November and December 1923 and January 1924, the residencies were untouched and depredations committed on the work camps of the Utah Construction Company were of a minor character.

But, with the breaking up of the revolution, following directly on the heels of Huertista reverses at Compostella, Aguacatlan and Ocotlan, the "rebels" broke for the hills in small bodies. Some of the revolutionists went to work for the Utah Construction Company, maintaining, however, their connection with their hill scouring brethren. For a couple of months nearly every camp suffered a raid or two, especially in the country bordering the Miravalles Cañon. Engineer Knight had finished his work in Residency Four and was moved farther down the line into the lava-beds, establishing his residency—I forgot the number—near the town of Aguacatlan.

Mr. Knight was a long, lean Texan. He looked the plains, was slow, methodical, silent, affable, studious and totally unafraid. Adjectives enough, I suppose? But it still does not describe Mr. Knight. He rode one morning over the lava-beds to the east of the residency, accompanied only by his *mozo*, a fat little Mexican lad, who was riding some distance in the rear. This trip was preliminary to estimate week for one of the sub-contractors and Mr. Knight was merely looking things over.

To digress for a moment. Lying to the south of Aguacatlan, and close tothe banks of the Rio Tetitlan, a howling little mountain stream of great depth, though very narrow, was the home of an orphan girl whose name I have forgotten. The place was known as the Haciendito Blanco (Little White House). The young lady, very well to do, was engaged to a young chap living near Aguacatlan. The two, on the day of which I write, were en route to the little city of Tetitlan, probably eight or ten miles away. They were seized by a party of bandits numbering, possibly, thirty, threatened, abused and ransom demanded.

While manhandling the sweetheart of the young lady the bandits happened to catch sight of Mr. Knight riding slowly along, totally unaware of the dangers into which he was walking. His *mozo* was probably two or three hundred yards behind.

The bandits surrounded Mr. Knight. He recognized some of them as having been employed along the line in construction. They demanded money but he insisted that he had no such sums as they demanded. They led him, along with the other two captives, into an open mesa and found two or three shrubs to one of which they tied him. The others were tied facing him. The throat of the man was cut and Knight was given a hint as to what would happen to him if he did not produce the ransom. Then the girl was killed in a like manner.

In the meantime the little servant had taken to his heels, on the run, very fortunately for Mr. Knight, toward the town of Aguacatlan. There are no telephones in that section, except those lines which sometimes—and the word sometimes is used advisedly—connect the larger cities. He reported the bandits to the local military authorities at Aguacatlan and they in turn reported to Tetitlan, six miles away, and immediately a troop of fifty cavalry set out for the scene of the hold-up.

Mr. Knight finally convinced the bandits that he could not pay the required ransom but did state that there were seven or eight hundred pesos at the camp, just two miles distant, and if they would take him there they were perfectly welcome to it. They agreed. He was taken to the camp, but the main body, fearing an ambuscade, remained in a ravine a quarter of a mile away while some of the leaders started with Knight to camp. The soldiers had, by merest accident, swung between camp and the ravine, and almost before Knight knew it he had been rescued and the pursuit started. Word came to Guadalajara that only one or two of the bandits escaped.—G. D. Wyman.

FROM Raymond S. Spears a few words concerning his story in this issue, with a note also on "The Wolf Pack," which appeared several months ago.

Inglewood, California.

The territory I had in mind is southeastern Utah, where there is a vast uninhabited region. The "great canyon" of the story is of course the Canyon of the Colorado. Waterholes, streams where the boy found fish, dens, canyons, high ranges—I did not detail these in the story. And almost any of the ranges might be "The Trembling Haze" mountains. The boy, in the nature of things, would not know their name—nor the generally nameless localities east of them.

The tourists followed the old trail, now a stage and auto route, to the North Brim of the Grand Canyon. A good deal of that territory is merely uninhabited, and except for occasional expeditions, unknown. And desperadoes lurked in those fastnesses in the days when Charlie Siringo chased the Wild Bunch from Milk River, Montana, to Alma, New Mexico.

I did not go into geological or topographical details—and the map would not do to travel by—though roughly I followed Grand Canyon north brim conditions. In fiction I edit the landscape as I do my other facts, selecting what I need and ignoring the other things.

I could not detail the wanderings of the boy and wolf as they hunted. I did note waterholes and the den where Ghost died.

Incidentally, one of the pick-and-shovel Utah prospectors, with whom I trailed by auto from just west of Ely into San Francisco read "The Wolf Pack" and declared he knew that country—it was his country, up Duchesne way. He recognized the descriptions, in spite of my changing the names.

And W. L. Lappe of Columbus, Ohio, writes me that the four wolves which were killed when I went through the Duchesne country were Three Toes and her three pups, a government trapper getting them in the "rugged section of the Book Cliff Mountains" near the Utah-Colorado line. I had some data about this Three Toes but did not know it was her killing I'd heard about "on the spot."

In having Ghost feed his suffering mate a poison pill I am going pretty far, of course. But twice in my own trapping I found animals which had thrust their heads under water and kept them there. One, a muskrat, had to tug and stretch to get its head into the water because the chain was tangled in the roots of a stump. A snowshoe hare broke a trap loose, galloped along a runway more than 100 yards and buried his head in the muck of an open spring. And wolves in packs kill their wounded mates. I have seen where foxes and fishers (pekan, weasel tribe) picked up and carried away poison pellets—to bury them. And their tracks showed their anxiety, just as their tracks show doubt and caution when wolves monkey around traps. I hardly know where to draw the line even in my own mind, as regards animal intelligence, or their intentions.—SPEARS.

WE'VE already heard one letter of advice to the young convict who, as his release drew near, wrote George E. Holt for advice in helping him to begin life over again and travel the straight road. A second letter was too long for the same hearing, so here it is at this one. It is from one of us who has twice "done time" in the "Big House" and yet not found it difficult to come back, make an honest living and find a place for himself in his community. His advice should be valuable to the many others who face the same problem.

Camp-Fire:—Gentlemen, be seated.

Now on purchasing the current copy of our magazine, I as usual read "Camp-Fire" first; and there I noted the letter from a young man, doing his second jolt in the Can,—the Big House, rather,—and ten months to go,—yet. The youthful two-time-loser has the Burning Desire to make it to Morocco; he is negatived out of that by our Mr. Holt, who suggests Australia or New Zealand, as something easier than the land where Men are Sheiks, though what these countries have to offer that can't be supplied by the good old U. S. A. deponent knoweth not and a lotta more people don't know, either.

Since *I* have been in exactly the same position as this young man, I take the liberty—and the pleasure, etc.—in doing so.

"There never was a town so poor it would refuse a prize to one who tries to make things hum, with ardor in his eyes," said Walt Mason, I believe—I read this in the Can, besides, "The desire to accomplish is proof of ability to accomplish," and *I* had a horrible yen or burning desire to "accomplish" something besides landing back behind the bars again the *second* time they turned me loose upon a long-suffering, etc., public. Looking back from where I sit it never occurred to me that the police and detectives, etc., would "hound" me, since I was "small fry" and the police would have one big job on their hands to "hound" every ex"-con." "just getting out." True, some of the big fellows, like the Handy Andies who "open safes without the use of tools," or the "paper hangers" or check forgers, rather, and such, the various "agencies" throughout the countries *try* to keep an eye on. Whether or not they succeed,—read your daily paper as to latest crime reports. What made me laugh, however, on reading the sad stuff penned by the youthful one who looks to other fields to conquer, besides these mere United States,—or I should say, who is itching to blow clean out of the country, or hop from the frying-pan into the fire, or what have you—anyhow, what is the big idea of leaving the good old U. S. A.?

The offered explanation is: Where people won't "hound" you, where employers will not be "informed" of the former whereabouts of the young man in question. Our efficient police have other things to 'tend to than try to trace or "hound" every Tom, Dick and Harry who's let loose from the Can, or Big House. Away with that noise! Good (former) "guns," grifters, dips, pete men, hornswogglers, talk-men, yeggs, etc., ad nauseam, have been and *are* "making good," at this writing, all over the country—same old U. S. I mentioned. Making good, yes,—making good wages, supporting families—after one, two, or four or five, even, jolts in the Can or Big House. Please not to overlook *that*. It hardly occurred to any or all of them to clean out of the country whose money is *the* money of the world today. Why, ——, no (excuse the French). Among these aforementioned yeggs, pete men, etc., or *formerly* such, I belong in that class, for see, I am an ex-convict, a former two-time loser, residing right in the good old U. S. A., and laugh when I think of the second time I left a Big House and wandered adown the road, a "free man" again. The remembrance of that is pleasant—it's laughable, if only for this instance: When the Sheriff had me carefully chained in his buggy, taking me *to* the penitentiary, I yearned for one nice cold glass of beer—the day was hot—but evidently the good kind Sheriff was afraid to take a chance, for he got out, carefully shifted his belted gat in front to a handy position, and pumped me a glass of water instead.

And so, as I meandered on adown the road on my

release, passing the same saloon, I went inside and bought one beer. "Just out?" inquired the bartender. Between gulps, or sips, I affirmed, or yes sirred him. "Have one on the house," said he. "Thanks," said I, "I just wanted *one* beer." And walked out.

This second release took place in the year that Henry Ford was making the 1915 models of his cars and, if anything, the ex-con. had a somewhat harder row to hoe, those days, than these modern days; what with coddling the convict (or whad ya call it) and other soft stuff now available to those in the know, or the man inside and ere he hits the outside. Various "mission" people always extend the glad hand (as *they* say); other "societies" are willing to help the ex-con., as their representatives affirm, at "meetings" in prison, and such, and from all such the ex-con. will kindly steer shy when released, for *why* advertise the fact that he's "just out" and wants "to make good?" Chances are he won't be believed anyhow. Oh, I know; *I* have traveled *that* road.

Now when, say, ten months hence, this young man is handed his discharge papers, given his "gate money" and is conducted adown the gravel path (every prison has a "gravel path," ain't it?) by the deppitty warden or other, there's a thing or two he wants to do, on hitting the free air, when let loose and meandering adown the road, a free man:

First, carefully tear up that "discharge paper." (Could any buddy tell *me* what good it is, anyhow, except as a "bad give-away" in case it's found upon him?) Next, eat a good meal, with hot coffee. About the sixth bite and the fourth sip of the good coffee, things will look a —— of a lot brighter.

A package of cigarets, and a box of matches, price one cent, are next. From the gate money this young man has received he has now spent, let us say, thirty-five cents for the meal, and fifteen for cig's,—perhaps they threw in a box of matches?—who has by now ditched all comical ideas about New and Old Zealand, Australia, Morocco, etc., is going to hunt himself a job, be it however humble.

In the penitentiary town? No, ma'am. He's going to leave town. But he has very little money, no change of clothes, virtually nothing besides what he stands up in, and—"

Yes, I know. *I* traveled that road.

The young man is now leaving the town where he resided, for, let us say, three years (mentioning my own "jolt" or length of it) and he's going to meander along the Broad Highway that leads out of town to somewheres. To walk? Yes, for perhaps a few hundred yards, when he'll be "picked up" by some motorist or truck driver. And so, at length, our young friend finds himself in another town, or city, perhaps.

But he has no trade. He has merely been studying export and import, accounting or what not. He has no trade. Well, neither did I, when being let loose after the second jolt. I was uncommonly handy at "safe work"—well, never mind. I couldn't get a job at it, I thought, so I promptly forgot about it and went to work. Did I "walk the streets in a vain endeavor to find employment?" (Where did I read that?) No, ma'am and gentlemen of the Camp-Fire, nothing so wearing on the nerves and the creaking sole-leather as all that. I had some buddy bring the job right to me. How? Well, in every city that is a city one finds employment offices—the "slave market" as it is known. I sat me down upon the high curbing in front of one such, smoked my peaceful cigaret, and waited. Employers who are "wise" and do not care to pay a "fee" for obtaining an employee, often walk the sidewalks in front of the "slave markets" and see whom they can see. So at length, about the end of the second cigaret butt, somebody tapped me on the shoulder! No, I didn't nervously jump up and hold out my wrist, bravely saying, "Put on the darbies, awficer." I looked up and into the smiling face of a kind old gentleman who asked me if I wanted work. I arose and thanked him for the job.

"Job?" said he.

"Why yes," said I. "I'm hired, ain't I?"

"Y'are," said he. "I see *you* want to work."

And he asked me neither for references nor former employment-providers or antecedents or family history. I drove in his spring wagon with him to his truck farm. And nobody hounded me, I noticed, that whole month I stayed there.

Now the very same ingenuity, rapid thinking, line of talk, etc., often needed by the man who travels outside the law can be applied with surprizing results within the law. A nice "line of bull" about where he formerly worked, etc., can be handed to inquisitive people, or the employers, let us say, of this young man, same as *I* worked. If he's turned loose in "the harvest season" the one about "just in from the harvest fields" is good. There are "white lies." Is any lie whiter than the one used by an ex-con. trying to make good (without advertising) telling his employer "he's just in from the harvest fields?" The noes have it. Thank you, gentlemen.

Article three of the "code"— What code? The unpublished one of the man inside—reads: "The closed mouth." In general, the closed mouth is serviceable to the man just "out." Why peddle the fact that one is just out, to any one, as many "just outs" do? Trying to raise sympathy, aid, pocket money, or something. "Well, Jack, I just blew in from the harvest fields" is a better line to hand out, if so be that "harvest" is in season. If not, the country is full of coal mines, y' know. "Just in from so-and-so mine." But this man is no miner? What of it? He's a "mucker," then. Every miner has his mucker, an able-bodied shovel-stiff who "cleans up."

Now various writers have pointed out that if a man criminally inclined were to expend the same amount of energy, cuteness, ability, cleverness, line of bull, etc., or whatever he uses in his regular shady endeavors, to some honest endeavor, he'd get by a whole lot nicer, easier and all that. Whoever thought o' that was dangerously near to the truth,—for, for several years I have performed at some rather "close" mechanical work for a nice fat pay envelope once per week, and a lot of the

"tricks" I formerly knew—and practised, by the way, with a gat on my person, as I "practised" 'em—now come in quite handy at my honest line of work. And that's that.

Yes. From the first farm job I had on my (second) release, I progressed along the nice open road of honest endeavor—and found the going good! Never, through the years, have I been "stopped" or "hounded." I'm here to assert that if a man (even though "just out") give a good imitation of a workingman, steer shy of the modern substitute for former good beer and other gents' refreshments; above all, avoid the much advertised "bad company," and bear his job in mind, it'll be nice traveling. I know —I traveled that road; the going is still good—getting better, I might say.

No, I don't suppose that these ravings will be published in our magazine, but if so be that some gist of it might be selected as being helpful to the man in the Can, who'll tear up his discharge papers about ten months from now, then I have not belabored this writing engine of mine in vain in an endeavor to aid some buddy who fell by the wayside, or what is the koreckt Angleesh to use here?

"There's help for those who help themselves"—not to other people's goods, but to a job, might I say; and though this young man could be handed a sum of money or roll of jack—and by the way, any buddy taking up a collection for him, count me in on it—money *is* a help—but though he could be handed a sum of cash jack or probably supplied with a nice job by a man "who knows all about his past," *there's* a job I wouldn't take. "The closed mouth" about his past, first, last and any old time! If he's got the guts to make good, he'll do it without some buddy "knowing all about his past," and though I sit here and broadcast to the world, or the bunch who might read this, the comical fact that I am a two-time loser, I rely upon the reader of this to omit, please, the reg'lar monicker or given or true name of this deponent. For I'm not *advertising* the fact that I roosted two jolts in a Big House—merely trying to hand out a line of something that might do some buddy some good.

The program for the young man "just out" is as follows:

The release.

Carefully pocketing the gate money.

Brisk walk—away from there to somewhere else.

Careful tearing-up of discharge papers.

The filling eats.

The soothing smoke.

The beginning of the journey—along the nice open road of Honest Endeavor.

The nice auto ride to another city.

The first job.

The second job.

The third job, and so on, etc.

—The end.—

Thanking you, whoever reads, for your patience in wading through this, I remain—LARMER EDDIE.

(No, after eleven years they won't recognize that.)

ACCORDING to Camp-Fire custom, James Mitchell Clarke rises to introduce himself on the occasion of his first story in our magazine:

I was born in a snowstorm on Feb. 14, 1903, at Miles City, Mont. At the time, the town had more saloons than houses, which has less than nothing to do with the story—as my parents were god-fearing folk.

My father—who was a stockman and lived most of his life in Montana and Wyoming—died when I was four years old, and from then until I was twelve I lived mostly on railroad trains while the family wandered about hunting a place where we could all be well.

In 1916 we settled in San Diego, Calif., where I made the acquaintance of the Pacific Ocean.

At seventeen I entered Pomona College, and was graduated B. A. in 1924 by the grace of God and the good nature of the faculty. During these years I worked on buildings and in lumber yards and almost any job that I could get. Rambled about the country a good deal—with one short voyage up the coast.

The summer I finished college, I drifted east (by precarious means that are popular with people who don't have any money and want to get somewhere) and after a winter of ups and downs in Manhattan—that wicked city beside the Hudson River—I got a job on *Adventure*.

Last fall I came west again to give my body a chance to build up, and went to work in a lumber yard. One day the man I'd been driving with on a truck went over a grade and was killed. That was enough for me—so I went to writing.

I'd rather write about truck-drivers and iron-workers than anything else. The American roughneck is worth a lot of attention, and I hope to put him on paper so that *Adventure* will have him—now that he's back home again after fighting Leonard Nason's European war.

And a word in connection with his "Off the Trail" story in this issue:

The exact location of Tarshish is a matter of considerable doubt. Tarsus in Cicilia and Carthage are given as possible locations. It seems probable, however, that the city was Taressus in Spain; a place which was very important in the commerce of the time as a shipping point for gold and precious stones.

Unfortunately there is also controversy as to the exact location of Taressus. It has been variously placed at the mouth of the Guadalquiver River—between the two branches at a place called Carteia in the bay of Gibraltar, and at Gadira—which is the modern Cadiz. I have chosen to mark this latter point on the map, as Cadiz is more readily identifiable by modern readers than the other points.

In the absence of any definite proof as to the location of the city, it would seem rather presuming to mark any probably line of ship-travel on the map.
—JAMES MITCHELL CLARKE.

GET out your atlas—you'll need a complete map of the world to follow Gordon MacCreagh's wanderings, though we can give you here only a sketchy outline of his life. At this moment a map of North Africa would do, for at present Gordon MacCreagh is in Abyssinia, or on his way there, to trace the sources of some of the interesting legends of that region. He is conducting the *Adventure* Abyssinian Expedition. The Century Publishing Company, the United States National Museum (the Smithsonian Institution), the Pathe Motion Picture Corporation and several other firms and institutions are interested in the project, but the expedition is *Adventure's* Expedition. You'll get the fruits of it in a series of notes sent right from the field; later there will be a book—do you remember "White Waters and Black," the book MacCreagh wrote about his South American explorations in 1921? *Adventure* will have the first-hand hot-off-the-griddle stuff this time, the material from which the new book will be made.

A man of peace, a scientist, an author, is Gordon MacCreagh. You know him as a writer and explorer, scientists recognize him as a fellow worker, and we have his own word that he is a man of peace.

He began his official career when he went to Paris to study art at the age of seventeen. Seventeen-year-old students of art are as likely to become plumbers as artists; this one did neither, but after being mixed up in a saber duel and hastening abroad for a few months' sojourn in Germany, he went to Calcutta. There he obtained a "splendid appointment" from a gentleman in the shipping business in Calcutta. The "splendid appointment" paid little but offered some interesting experiences. The last of them was when four of the Hindoo crew of a lighter on which MacCreagh was shipping died of bubonic plague and the rest of the crew deserted.

It was very soon after this incident that MacCreagh became a planter's assistant in the tea district of Darjeeling. Then he went into Nepal in the Himalayas after big game and over the Jalap La pass into Tibet after turquoises.

After that he worked his way back to Borneo, where he collected orang-outangs and pythons for a menagerie in Liverpool; then to Burma, where besides big game he gathered orchids, rubber, ivory and malaria, with a side trip to the head hunters' country where he did not get the jade he went for but managed to obtain one of the famous and rare desiccated spheres, of the size of an orange, to which these fierce little tribesmen reduce their enemies' heads.

For a while he had a job with the Government Keddah Department, the government department for catching and handling wild elephants. Then he worked in a ruby mine at Mogok, where he found a fine stone, and joyously told about it, and soon thereafter found himself alone with a voice which said "Hand over that stone, young man!" while something blue and shining glimmered in the darkness. And, being a man of peace, Gordon MacCreagh went his way without the ruby.

The teak forests of Siam, where he lost his job for getting a work-elephant clawed up on a tiger hunt—and missing the tiger; the silk trade in China and Japan, where the wily Celestials did him in very neatly; a private motion picture venture with a companion among the aborigines of Burma; India again in a post-office printing job.

Life was moving too slowly, so MacCreagh helped a temple dancing-girl escape to America to get a job on the vaudeville stage. Hindoo priests tried to stop him and MacCreagh was very ill with an overdose of arsenic, but they got away to New York, and the lady had her chance at the stage.

And, in spite of the perils of man, beast, and disease in the wilderness, Gordon MacCreagh found his first years in the civilized metropolis more difficult than any he had experienced. For having some ability as a writer—he had had a book "Big Game in the Shan States," published in Calcutta—he tried to break into the writing game. In our issue of October, 1913, *Adventure* published his first story to appear in our pages, "The Brass Idol"; but in spite of this and other successes it was a hard grind. MacCreagh stuck to it, and slowly struggled to his present rank. By a strange coincidence he lived during part of this period with another unrecognized beginner—Captain Dingle, now also an honored member of our writers' brigade.

Then a party of scientists went to explore the unknown country about the headwaters of the Amazon, and MacCreagh went along to dicker with natives and mules and convoy the company and its six tons of equipment and scientific paraphernalia through pathless jungles and uncharted swamps.

If you ask him suddenly what happened on that expedition Mr. MacCreagh becomes shy and reticent and forgets details; but he wrote several letters to Camp-Fire at the time and has written a book about the trip which tells of an adventure or two.

He can't be so reticent about his present expedition, for there will be those field-notes to give him away. He has promised them to us and he is a man of honor as well as a man of peace. And while we don't wish Mr. MacCreagh any hard luck, we expect his communications to be pretty interesting—so, along about June or July, when we hope to have them for you, be ready with your map of Northern Africa.

By the way, have you ever compared the area of Abyssinia with that of the United States? Do so, and realize that a large part of this territory is unmapped. Then you'll have an idea of what MacCreagh is up against.—J. M. C.

ASK *Adventure*

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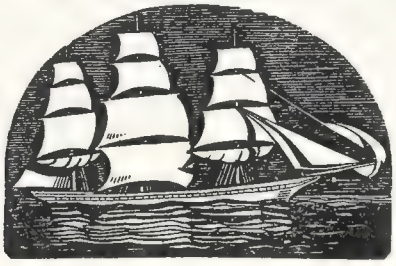

Questions and Answers

Accurate Information on Outdoor Life and Activities Everywhere

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Adventure's Travel Association

A Service Organization with Stations and Experts all over the World

Old Songs that Men have Sung

Collecting and Discussing Old Songs still Living among the People

Mississippi River

A CHANCE at a job that Mark Twain made famous. But the tests that would-be pilots have to pass are probably even more severe than they were when young Mr. Clemens first essayed to take the wheel.

Request:—"I understand that shipping is being renewed on the Mississippi River and is being fostered by the Government. This being so, there must be an increasing demand for pilots. I would like some information as to how one can get a pilot's license. I do not know the river but I believe there is some way that one can serve an apprenticeship on the river."—A. H. B., Miami, Fla.

Reply, by Mr. Zerr:—Your intentions are excellent, but you have a long road to travel, before you can qualify as a first-rate pilot. The inland rivers or their navigation are under the supervision of the U. S. Steamboat Inspection service, consequently

you must undergo a stiff examination. However, nothing like making a start and to do that you should be on the ground. Aside from the Federal Barge Line of steamers at St. Louis there is the Streckfus Line, St. Louis. Masters and pilots must come up from the ranks, as also marine engineers. The former start as common deck hands, while the latter generally start as firemen, then oilers or striker engineers. G. W. King, sec'y of Masters' & Pilots' Association, 18 Merchants-Laclede Bldg., 4th & Olive Sts., St. Louis, might answer a letter directed to him.

Section 25, General Rules and Regulations, prescribed by the Board of Supervising Inspectors, U. S. Department of Commerce says: "No original license for pilot of any class shall be issued to any person, except for special license of steamers of 10 gross tons and under, who has not served at least three years in the deck department of a steam vessel, motor vessel, sail vessel, one year of which experience must have been obtained within the three years next preceding the date of application for license, which fact the inspectors shall require, when practicable, to be verified by the certificate, in writing, of the licensed master or pilot under whom the applicant has served, such certificate to be filed with the application of the candidate: Provided, That one year's experience as quartermaster or wheelsman while holding a second-class pilot license shall entitle the holder of such license to examination for license as first-class pilot. Special pilots may be licensed for steamers of 10 gross tons and under, locally employed. The local inspectors shall, before granting a license as pilot, satisfy themselves that the applicant is qualified to steer.

Furthermore, should you hold a license to pilot on the Mississippi river and you would wish to navigate boats on any of the tributaries, you must first learn those channels and then receive an extension to your original license. A marine engineers' license holds good on any stream, however only in the class for which he was examined.

Andes

TWO questions about a high country where white men use llamas as beasts of burden. How both of them fare.

Request:—"How much load can be put on a llama when traveling over the Andes?

How high up before the tenderfoot gets sick to his stomach?"—HERBERT WOLFE, Los Gatos, Calif.

Reply, by Mr. Edgar Young:—A llama carries four arrobas or 100 pounds and will lay down if more is put on him. They work them two weeks and allow them to rest two weeks and they pick lichens and grass as they travel.

About 12,500 feet will make a tenderfoot feel sick. He gets sicker from then on up. This sickness is called *soroche* or *puna.*

Alaska

WHERE—would you believe it?—a Californian eats up the cold. Other facts concerning prospecting that have a more general interest.

Request:—"Myself and party of three are contemplating a trip into Alaska and the north in general, for the purpose of prospecting and trapping. We are in all respects familiar with the line of work, although not in the northern regions. So in order to acquaint ourselves with the northland, we come to you for this information:

Is it possible to reach the most desirable points in a forty-foot boat of the cruiser type?

What kind of equipment as to rifles, clothing, and traps would be considered good?

Where can we get an accurate map of the waterways?

Is there any profit to be made by trapping in a general way? And what animals bring the greater returns?

Our capital is $3,000 so please advise accordingly."—T. E. CASTLETON.

Reply, by Mr. Solomons:—In the first place you will get along nicely in the Arctic. For a year or two the Californian eats up the cold—doesn't mind it as much as a "Canuck" or other inhabitant of a cold country.

With a forty-foot boat you could get up the Kobuc or Noatak a long way. And also up all the tributaries of the Yukon. I am assuming that your boat would be of *shallow draft,* that is, without keel. Two feet will take you most anywhere except into the head streams in many places, and except the south coast short rivers. How will you get your forty-foot "cruiser" up there? Could be taken on a steamer's deck, I suppose.

Ordinary traps, guns, general equipment. As to clothes, general also. Your special ditto, such as foot gear, parkas and mittens get up there. Don't burden yourself with a lot of impedimenta which somebody tells you is just the clear quill. Take cash instead of burdens. The boat is the thing. The rest will attend to itself when you get there.

Send for the Government publications, Department of the Interior, Wash., D. C. No charge. Maps cost a little, though good maps are usually in the pamphlets also.

Trapping is fairly profitable to a few who know the game and the country. I can't promise much—except a royal time. Cross, black and silver-tip fox bring good money. Muskrat is up still and plentiful up there. Also mink, which is very fine.

If you are first rate sailors, go up in your cruiser. It's some undertaking, though. Don't expect to make money in one season. That will merely put you wise to the country. You might, of course. $3,000 is a lot to spend on that kind of a trip, aside from the boat!

Aviation

WE HOPE that all Air Service men who saw in a recent issue the account of the war record of Lt. Col. Schauffler will read the letter from him which is printed below. That account was obtained not from Lt. Col. Schauffler but—to save time—from a former captain in the Air Service who was, it appears, more enthusiastic than accurate.

Will you please correct it in as early an issue as possible, for I'm afraid *Adventure* and I will never hear the end of it from fellows who have served with the Air Service.

True, I was one of the first to enlist in the Air Service, but I was flying for about eight or nine months *before* the United States went into the war. That makes little difference however.

The decorations are two-thirds wrong. I received the French Croix de Guerre with gold star, but never received the United States Distinguished Service Cross, although I was mentioned for it. Also I never received the United States Distinguished Service Medal. This medal for the most part was given only to Generals or very high ranking officers.

During the Meuse-Argonne operations I served as Commanding Officer of the Ninetieth Observation Squadron and as Commanding Officer of the *Third Corps* Observation Group. I was never Air Service Commander of the First Corps. After the Armistice I did serve as Operations Officer, Assistant Chief of Staff and Chief of Staff of the First Army Air Service, but *NOT* during operations at the front.

I did not participate in six major operations. I have bars on my Victory Medal for "Defense of Toul Sector," "St. Mihiel Offensive" and the "Meuse-Argonne Offensive."

I did not join and never was a member of the First Provisional Squadron which Col. Bolling (not Bowling) commanded. I enlisted at Fortress Monroe, November 1916, finished extra training as a Sergeant at the Curtiss Flying School, Newport News, Virginia in February 1917, and was commissioned a First Lieutenant and put on active duty with the Third Aero Squadron, at Fort Sam Houston, April 2 1917. I joined the First Aero Squadron, Regular Army at Columbus, New Mexico, May 1917, and sailed with them from New York August 13, 1917. I served with the First Aero Squadron until June 1918 and then took command of the Ninetieth Aero Squadron, and served with this unit until October 1918 when I took command of the Third Corps Observation Group during the Meuse-Argonne offensive.

I am sure you will see my point of view on this matter and will correct the statement as soon as possible. I would have liked to have had all the honors described in your paragraph, but in justice to the hundreds of fellows who didn't get a thing when they should have I would appreciate a correction.—W. G. SCHAUFFLER, JR.

Our Experts—They have been chosen by us not only for their knowledge and experience but with an eye to their integrity and reliability. We have emphatically assured each of them that his advice or information is not to be affected in any way by whether a commodity is or is not advertised in this magazine.

They will in all cases answer to the best of their ability, using their own discretion in all matters pertaining to their sections, subject only to our general rules for "Ask Adventure," but neither they nor the magazine assume any responsibility beyond the moral one of trying to do the best that is possible.

1. **Service**—It is free to anybody, provided self-addressed envelop and *full* postage, *not attached*, are enclosed. Correspondents writing to or from foreign countries will please enclose International Reply Coupons, purchasable at any post-office, and exchangeable for stamps of any country in the International Postal Union. Be sure that the issuing office stamps the coupon in the left-hand circle.

2. **Where to Send**—Send each question direct to the expert in charge of the particular section whose field covers it. He will reply by mail. Do NOT send questions to this magazine. All questions on actual travel should be addressed to "Adventure's Travel Association," care *Adventure*, not to this department. All questions, however, on equipment (except ordinary travel equipment) should be addressed to this department, not to "Straight Goods."

3. **Extent of Service**—No reply will be made to requests for partners, for financial backing, or for chances to join expeditions. "Ask Adventure" covers business and work opportunities, but only if they are outdoor activities, and only in the way of general data and advice. It is in no sense an employment bureau.

4. **Be Definite**—Explain your case sufficiently to guide the expert you question.

Salt and Fresh Water Fishing *Fishing-tackle and equipment; fly and bait casting and bait; camping-outfits; fishing-trips.*—JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care *Adventure*.

Small Boating *Skiff, outboard small launch river and lake tripping and cruising.*—RAYMOND S. SPEARS, Inglewood, California.

Canoeing *Paddling, sailing, cruising; equipment and accessories, clubs, organizations, official meetings, regattas.*—EDGAR S. PERKINS, 5742 Stony Island Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Yachting BERIAH BROWN, Coupeville, Wash., or HENRY W. RUBINKAM, Chicago Yacht Club, Box 507, Chicago, Ill.

Motor Boating GEORGE W. SUTTON, 6 East 45th St., New York City.

Motor Camping JOHN D. LONG, 1133 Broadway, New York City.

Motor Vehicles *Operation, operating cost, legislative restrictions, public safety.*—EDMUND B. NEIL, care *Adventure.*

All Shotguns *including foreign and American makes; wing shooting.* JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care *Adventure.*

All Rifles, Pistols and Revolvers *including foreign and American makes.*—DONEGAN WIGGINS, R. F. D. 3, Box 75, Salem, Ore.

Edged Weapons—ROBERT E. GARDNER, 423 Wilson Ave., Columbus, O.

Archery EARL B. POWELL, Terrace Hotel, Sidney, Ohio.

First Aid on the Trail *Medical and surgical emergency care, wounds, injuries, common illnesses, diet, pure water, clothing, insect and snake bite; industrial first aid and sanitation for mines, logging camps, ranches and exploring parties as well as for camping trips of all kinds. First-aid outfits. Meeting all health hazard of the outdoor life, arctic, temperate and tropical zones.*—CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, M. D., Falls City, Neb.

Health-Building Outdoors *How to get well and how to keep well in the open air, where to go and how to travel, right exercise, food and habits, with as much adaptation as possible to particular cases.*—CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, M. D., Falls City, Neb.

Hiking CLAUDE P. FORDYCE, M.D., Falls City, Neb.

Camp Cooking HORACE KEPHART, Bryson City, N. C.

Mining and Prospecting *Territory anywhere on the continent of North America. Questions on mines, mining law, mining, mining methods or practise; where and how to prospect; how to outfit; how to make the mine after it is located; how to work it and how to sell it; general geology necessary for miner or prospector, including the precious and base metals and economic minerals such as pitchblende or uranium, gypsum, mica, cryolite, etc. Questions on investment excluded.*—VICTOR SHAW, Loring, Alaska.

Forestry in the United States *Big-game hunting, guides and equipment; national forests of the Rocky Mountain States. Questions on the policy of the Government regarding game and wild animal life in the forests.*—ERNEST W. SHAW, South Carver, Mass.

Tropical Forestry *Tropical forests and forest products; their economic possibilities; distribution, exploration, etc.*—WILLIAM R. BARBOUR, care *Adventure.*

Railroading in the U. S., Mexico and Canada *General office, especially immigration, work; advertising work, duties of station agent, bill clerk, ticket agent, passenger brakeman and rate clerk. General Information.*—R. T. NEWMAN, P. O. Drawer 368, Anaconda, Mont.

Aviation *Airplanes; airships; airways and landing fields; contests; Aero Clubs; insurance; laws; licenses; operating data; schools; foreign activities; publications. No questions on stock promotion.*—LIEUT.-COL. W. G. SCHAUFFLER, JR., 2940 Newark St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

Army Matters, United States and Foreign LIEUT. GLENN R. TOWNSEND, Fort Snelling, Minn.

Navy Matters *Regulations, history, customs, drill, gunnery; tactical and strategic questions, ships, propulsion, construction, classification; general information. Questions regarding the enlisted personnel and officers except such as contained in the Register of Officers can not be answered. Maritime law.*—LIEUT. FRANCIS GREENE, U. S. N. R., 2200 Kinzie Ave., Racine, Wis.

State Police FRANCIS H. BENT, JR., care *Adventure.*

Royal Canadian Mounted Police PATRICK LEE, 73 Kingsboro Ave., Gloversville, N. Y.

Horses *Care, breeding, training of horses in general; hunting, jumping, and polo; horses of the old and new West.*—THOMAS H. DAMERON, 911 S. Union Ave., Pueblo, Colo.

Dogs JOHN B. THOMPSON ("Ozark Ripley"), care *Adventure.*

Ornithology PROF. ARCHIBALD RUTLEDGE, Mercersburg Academy, Mercersburg, Pa.

Photography *Information on outfitting and on work in out-of-the-way places. General information.*—PAUL L. ANDERSON, 36 Washington St., East Orange, New Jersey or SIGISMUND BLUMANN, Claus Spreckel Bldg., San Francisco, Cal.

Linguistics and Ethnology (*a*) *Racial and tribal tradition, history and psychology; folklore and mythology.* (*b*) *Languages and the problems of race migration, national development and descent (authorities and bibliographies).* (*c*) *Individual languages and language-families; interrelation of tongues, their affinities and plans for their study.*—DR. NEVILLE WHYMANT, 345 W. 23rd St., New York City.

American Anthropology North of the Panama Canal *Customs, dress, architecture, pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions.*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Museum of American Indians, 155th St. and Broadway, N. Y. City.

Taxidermy SETH W. BULLOCK care *Adventure.*

Herpetology *General information concerning reptiles (snakes, lizards, turtles, crocodiles) and amphibians (frogs, toads, salamanders); their customs, habits and distribution.*—DR. G. K. NOBLE, American Museum of Natural History, 77th St. and Central Park West, New York, N. Y.

Entomology *General information about insects and spiders; venomous insects, disease-carrying insects, insects attacking man, etc.; distribution.*—DR. FRANK E. LUTZ, Ramsey, N. J.

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Coins and Medals HOWLAND WOOD, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th St., New York City.

Radio *Telegraphy, telephony, history, broadcasting, apparatus, invention, receiver construction, portable sets.*—DONALD MCNICOL, 132 Union Road, Roselle Park, N. J.

SPORTS

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Track JACKSON SCHOLZ, 73 Farmington Ave., Long MEADOW, Mass.

Tennis FRED HAWTHORNE, Sports Dept., New York *Herald Tribune*, New York City.

Basketball JOE F. CARR, 16 E. Broad St., Columbus, Ohio.

Bicycling ARTHUR J. LEAMOND, 469 Valley St., South Orange, New Jersey.

Swimming LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 260 Washington St., N. Y. C.

Skating FRANK SCHREIBER, 2226 Clinton Ave., Berwyn, Ill.

Skiing and Snowshoeing W. H. PRICE, 160 Mance St., Montreal, Quebec.

Hockey "DANIEL," *The Evening Telegram*, 73 Dey St., New York City.

Boxing JAMES P. DAWSON, The New York *Times*, Times Square, New York City.

GEOGRAPHICAL SECTIONS.—Covering climate, topography, natural resources (minerals, timber, agriculture, live-stock, water-power), commerce and industry, institutions, inhabitants, customs, languages, history, opportunities, living conditions, health, outdoor life, hunting, fishing, trapping, camping, equipment, expeditions, adventure, general information. Additional subjects covered by any expert, are mentioned in his section.

The Sea Part 1 *American Waters.* Also ships, seamen, shipping; nautical history, seamanship, navigation, small-boat sailing; commercial fisheries of North America; marine bibliography of U. S.; fishing vessels of the North Atlantic and Pacific banks. (See next two sections.)—BERIAH BROWN, Coupeville, Wash.

The Sea Part 2 *Statistics and records of American shipping.*—HARRY E. RIESEBERG, Apartment 330-A, Kew Gardens, Washington, D. C.

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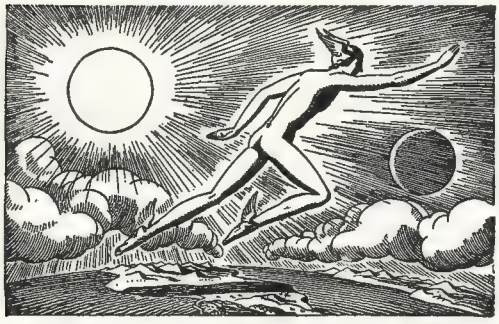

A Country in Action

YOU and I some years ago listened reverently to the stories of old masterpieces treasured in the Louvre, of ancient abbeys still standing in England, of palaces where Marie Antoinette lived and battlefields where Napoleon fought. It all seemed so far away and dim, a slightly faded but very wonderful old picture that every one should go to see some time. Then, when a few million Americans were rather abruptly jerked into the old canvas in 1917 they discovered some of the seething life that goes on among the famous museums and old ruins.

But the historic side, colorful and important as it is, is only one side of the European picture. That side has been so well covered that here I am going to talk a little about the other—Europe as it is today and what's going on this year. If you add that Europe to the other one you are going to have a much better time when you go over because you will find something in which you can take part and do more than just sight-seeing.

Suppose You're a Professional Man

MANY of your associates, including some of the greatest American specialists, are going to visit famous clinics all over Europe and exchange ideas and discoveries at the Medical Congress in Germany. This offers a priceless opportunity for renewed study and fresh knowledge with plenty of opportunity for trips to interesting spots and vacation amusement.

An engineer may spend a gay week at the San Sebastian fiesta in Spain, enjoy a stay in Paris and then take in the Great Technical Exhibition in Berlin or the Engineering Exhibit in London. There are countless fairs and exhibits in other countries, too, that will help the American scientist or engineer to meet his European colleagues and learn what they are doing in this field.

If You Follow The Races

THE Derby, of course, at Epsom Downs in June, and many others—a race every day somewhere in Europe—the Ascot races; the meets and exciting hunts in Scotland and Ireland; the cycle and motor races in France which, too, has horse races in half a dozen spots; the motor tournament in Germany; all through the year the breathless show goes on.

Events in all the other fields of sport offer keen excitement. A dozen international tennis and golf tournaments take place at different times in as many countries; the famous regattas draw thousands in England; there's hockey and Rugby in Wales; wrestling matches in Switzerland; bull fights in Spain; swimming meets in Germany; and to top off these vivid contrasts, you might go to Athens where they still hold the ancient Greek games and dances in the open stadium.

For the Musician and the Artist

EUROPE turns a completely different face to them. The artist finds inspiration in the old masterpieces of the museums and at the same time follows the strides of the great moderns. National

traits, new schools, individual developments, may all be studied and discussed in the London and Paris galleries where Americans and Frenchmen, English and German bring their works together. At Bayreuth is the great Wagnerian festival and at Munich the Bach and Beethoven concerts. Opera in Italy and exciting new music in Paris and Vienna, with hundreds of saint's days and festivals in every country where folk-song can be studied at its source.

The Business Man's Holiday

THE man who feels a twinge because he has left the factory or office when things were pretty busy may ease his conscience a bit if he picks up a few helpful pointers at the Business Efficiency Exhibition in Paris or at one of the Sample Fairs or Industries Exhibits in Germany. Manufacturers in these fields certainly get enough value out of the several foreign motor shows, the great furniture exhibitions, the technical fairs, to make their trips well worth while.

A Bit from the Calendar

PERHAPS the best picture of events in Europe can be given in the calendar for just one month in just one of the countries. In Spain during July you can enjoy any of these colorful events:

Pilgrimage celebration at Compostella
Grand Fiesta at San Sebastian
Horse Show at Barcelona
Water-Polo and Swimming Competitions —Barcelona
Yachting and Rowing Regattas—Barcelona

The other countries have much longer lists—too long to be printed here. The entire year's calendar of events for the other countries is available for A. T. A. members and we shall be glad to help you select those for your itinerary.

All Europe is alive with new ideas and action. Where many races are so near to each other, where the old is still so close to their lives and the new is so lusty there in interest for every one. You find the charm of customs and beauties that have been preserved for centuries coupled with amazing advances in science and the theater and industry.

To get the most out of your trip to this present-day Europe you must discriminate, take advantage of expert help in selecting those things that you most want to see and do. *Adventure's* Travel Association offers these services free to its guest-members until January 1, 1928:

1. Information from the central office on all phases of travel anywhere—railroad and steamship facilities, hotels, places of interest and general information.

2. The service of those cooperating factors which we select to handle your specific inquiry by sending at our request descriptive booklets, maps, expense estimates and similar data.

3. First-hand information from the large staff of "Ask Adventure" experts who, because they have lived in their territories for many years, are thoroughly equipped to answer questions on living conditions, expenses, fishing, hunting, camping, etc. In connection with this Question and Answer division are also the "Straight Goods" and book review services from which you can secure verdicts on outdoor commodities, travel equipment and travel books.

4. The assistance of local A. T. A. stations wherever you go. At these stations our members are referred to valuable local sources of information, are furnished helpful booklets, advised on road and camping conditions and in every way helped by the Station Keeper to a comfortable, friendly trip.

Any reader of *Adventure* may become a guest-member of the Travel Association by sending his name, address and brief outline of the trip he plans to take to *Adventure's* Travel Association, Butterick Building, New York City. Permanent memberships are to be issued in 1928 to guest-members who have traveled during 1927. A membership card, addresses of stations, personal information and descriptive literature is sent when the reader is enrolled. This first year is one of experimentation and growth and by enrolling promptly, giving us suggestions as we go along, our readers can help us in building a group of travelers and people interested in travel who can do much to better travel conditions and to foster friendship and understanding.—L. G.

Lists of Events by Courtesy of United States Lines

Old SONGS *that Men have Sung*

Conducted by R. W. GORDON

Devoted to outdoor songs, preferably hitherto unprinted—songs of the sea, the lumber-camps, Great Lakes, the old canal days, the negro, mountains, the pioneers, etc. Send in what you have or find, so that all may share in them. Although this department is conducted primarily for the collection and preservation of old songs, the editor will give information about modern ones when he can do so and if each request is accompanied with self-addressed envelope and sufficient reply postage (not attached). Write to Mr. R. W. Gordon direct (*not* to the magazine), care of Adventure, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City.

I COULD hardly have picked from my whole collection a better example of the diversity of the material that is of high value and interest to the student of the folk than the two songs printed below, both of which are from Mr. George Hirdt. But first the songs themselves; then, if there is room, some comment on them.

The Three Liars

'Twas down at Casey's restaurant
And lager beer saloon,
And every man inside the place
Was fuller than the moon,
Till they began to argufy
From one thing to that;
There wasn't a man there could tell
What he was aiming at.

When up jumped the landlord—
It was coming to a fight—
"More drinks, less arguments,
Or I'll put out the light!
I'll put up a proposition
I've a hog that's young and big
And the man that tells the biggest lie
Is the man that wins the pig."

The wager was accepted,
And the wild lager flowed
Till not a man inside the place
Could carry well his load.
The wager was accepted,
And the counters they began,
'Twas added to a liar man,
A liar man John McCann.

He took and swore an awful oath
Would make your hair stand up;
He said that for the next ten years
He would not taste a drop.
He is a man that would not drink water
If his tongue would swell that big.
They cried, "Three cheers for John McCann!
Why it's you that wins the pig!"

The next to take the floor
Was a man that you all knew,
The biggest liar on this earth
Was liar Donaghue.

He said he'd been in foreign lands
Where men hadn't been at all,
And when he came to this world's end
He found there was a wall.

He kicked upon the wall
And cut his name on stone;
'Twas forty thousand miles from land
And he walked back all alone.
He said he left the Stars and Stripes
A-floating in full rage.
"Oh hold your tongue, old Donaghue,
Why it's you who wins the pig!"

Then up steps old Larry Flannigan,
A liar from his youth;
He took an affidavit
As he meant to tell the truth.
He said, "That liar Donaghue
He blooms with empty pride
For when he kicked upon the wall
I was on the other side!

"I saw him raise the Stars and Stripes,
Said 'I will not be beat!'
And then ran up the Irish flag
And it's there waving yet!
And in honor of Old Ireland
On top I danced a jig—
The landlord's tapped another keg—
Why it's *me* that wins the pig!"

That doesn't look much like folk-song. It is in the broadside or "come-all-ye" style. But it is a marvellously well told folk-tale. The folk-tale of the liars' contest is extremely old. It occurs in practically every known country. In all the versions there are certain conventions. Usually, for example, there are three contestants. The first man tells a fair-sized lie, the second a much more ingenious one, but the third man is really clever. He assents to and vouches for the truth of the best lie told (thereby equaling his competitor) and then goes on to improve upon it.

This case is even more subtile. McCann makes a statement that is improbable, but it is not necessarily a lie at all. Only the future will tell. Of course he could make it a lie by drinking at once, but this evidently does not occur to him. Donaghue's statement also can not be *proved* a lie.

Flannigan equals Donaghue by lifting his story bodily and goes him one better, at the same time playing on the judges' patriotism.

Lowlands Low

There was a gallant ship from North Amerikee
And she goes by the name of the *Golden Vanitee*
She was to be taken by the Turkish galley
For to sink her in the lowlands, lowlands, lowlands,
For to sink her in the lowlands low.

The first man on deck was the little cabin boy
He said, "Captain what you'll give me if this ship I destroy?"
He said, "Gold I'll give you and my daughter for a bride,
If you sink her in the lowlands, lowlands, lowlands,
If you sink her in the lowlands, low."

The boy took an auger and overboard he jumped;
The boy bent his breast and off to sea he swam;
He swam till he came to the Turkish galley
For to sink her in the lowlands, *etc.*

The boy bored three holes, three holes he bored twice
While some were playing cards and others throwing dice;
He could hear their money jingle as the water it poured in
As she sank in the lowlands, *etc.*

The boy bent his breast and back again he swam;
He swam till he came to the *Golden Vanitie;*
He said, "Captain, pick me up for I am drifting with the tide
And I am sinking in the lowlands, *etc.*"

(In a missing verse the captain refuses.)

The boy swam around till he came to the other side;
His messmates picked him up and it's on the deck he died;
They rolled him in his hammock, for it was long and wide,
And they sank him in the lowlands, *etc.*

One fine summer's morning, the air was calm and clear,
A voice from the heaven came in the captain's ear
Saying, "Captain, dearest captain, you've been mighty cruel to me
Now I'll sink you in the lowlands, *etc.*"

The captain was amazed, he did not know what to say;
The captain was amazed as his mainmast gave away;
She leveled with the water and she sank beneath the sea—
Now she lies in the lowlands, lowlands, lowlands,
Now she lies in the lowlands, low.

This is a unique version of an old ballad, and is here for the first time published. It differs decidedly in its ending from any yet found.

SEND all contributions of old songs, and all questions concerning them, to—R. W. GORDON, care of *Adventure*, Spring & Macdougal Streets, New York City.

CAMP-FIRE BUTTONS—Designed to indicate the common interest which is the only requisite for membership in Camp-Fire and to enable members to recognize each other when they meet in far places or at home. Enameled in dark colors representing earth, sea and sky, and bears the numeral 71—the sum of the letters of the word Camp-Fire valued according to position in the alphabet. Exact size shown. Twenty-five cents, post-paid, anywhere. When sending for the button enclose a strong, self-addressed *un*stamped envelope. If check or money order is sent, please make it out to the Butterick Publishing Company, *not* to any individual.

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In our office, under each serial number, will be registered the name of bearer and of one or two friends, with permanent address of each. No name appears on the card. Letters will be forwarded to friend, unopened by us. Names and addresses treated as confidential. We assume no other obligations. Cards not for business identification. Cards furnished free *provided stamped and addressed envelope accompanies application.* We reserve the right to use our own discretion in all matters pertaining to these cards.

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STRAIGHT GOODS—This department has been omitted from this issue in order to give space to "A. T. A."

BOOKS YOU CAN BELIEVE—Verdicts of our experts on non-fiction books appear in alternate issues.

LOST TRAILS—This department for finding missing friends and relatives is printed only in alternate issues.

The Trail *Ahead*

The next issue of ADVENTURE, *out April 15th*

Beginning *a New Serial*

Wastrel

By Gordon Young

Dan McGuire had slept on sunlit beaches, had helped white ruffians, and had hidden, wounded and alone, in heaps of poisonous copra with the sound of yelling cannibals in his ear. Then young *David Brade* brought him to Kialo and a civilization within whose white walls lurked more danger than McGuire had yet encountered.

Sacrament

By Bill Adams

A long narrative poem of the sea

Two *Complete Novelettes*

The Well of Bitter Waters

By Georges Surdez

For many years *Moktar el Khiani* had terrorized the commerce of the western Sahara. With his raiders he came and went with the suddenness of a sandstorm. Young *Lieutenant Laforge* of the French Foreign Legion prophesied that the native chieftain would come once too often.

Thord's Wooing

By Arthur D. Howden Smith

On the Iceland shore were washed up a beautiful princess of the Ireland People and a giant sea rover girded with the deathless sword, Gray Maiden. From this woman *Thord the Bold* inherited wit and beauty; from the man he won Gray Maiden and a knowledge of swordsmanship. Then he set forth to establish his heritage.

And—*Other Good Stories*

Part Three of Cockades, by Meade Minnigerode, *in which a search is ended;* That Cartwheel Stallion, *money could not buy him,* by Edwin Hunt Hoover; The Silver Circle, by Lyman Bryson, Tu-op *abides by his honor.*

Adventure is out on the 1st and 15th of the month

H A V E A C A M E L

Why Camel leads the world

GOODNESS has made Camels the leader of the world that they are today. Goodness means the quality of the tobaccos from which they are made, the skill with which the tobaccos are blended to bring out the fragrance, to produce the mildness, to give that subtle quality and taste that smokers find only in Camel.

Goodness means such a standard of uniformity that the billionth or the trillionth Camel is sure to be just as good as the first. It means the honesty, the truthfulness, the sincerity of purpose to make and keep Camel the leader—the cigarette most preferred by the greatest number.

Have a Camel!

R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO COMPANY, WINSTON-SALEM, N. C.

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Chew DENTYNE *and smile!*

DON'T be afraid to smile. Smiles make friends the world over. Teeth play a big part. They should be snowy white when red lips part in a smile. ∾ ∾ Dentyne is a delicious gum that is more than a confection. It keeps breath sweet, teeth clean and white as pearls.

· KEEPS THE TEETH WHITE ·

Whatever you do—buy fast selling film

THE fresher the film, the surer the picture. Ansco has taken this into account in perfecting the handy Speedex Dispenser—making popular Ansco Speedex a faster seller than ever and guaranteeing its freshness.

If there's a chance in the world for a picture, Speedex is sure to come through. The brand new Ansco Dispenser brings it to you at its freshest.

And if it's a camera you want you'll be glad to meet the Ready-set. No focusing or adjusting. Just open—aim—shoot!

ANSCO

The distinction of originating roll-film, of putting the first hand and studio cameras on the American market and of being the first to establish a full line of professional supplies, all belongs to Ansco.

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HERE'S a steady, faithful, out-of-doors companion—a friendly little pal to take along when you're roughing it.

You can rely on Pocket Ben to measure the hours and minutes faithfully. He knows when it's starting time, meal-time, bed-time—no guess-work about it.

Pocket Ben is Big Ben's brother. The family name "Westclox" on his dial is your assurance of everything true and faithful in a time-keeper.

Sold everywhere—$1.50. With luminous night-dial $2.25.

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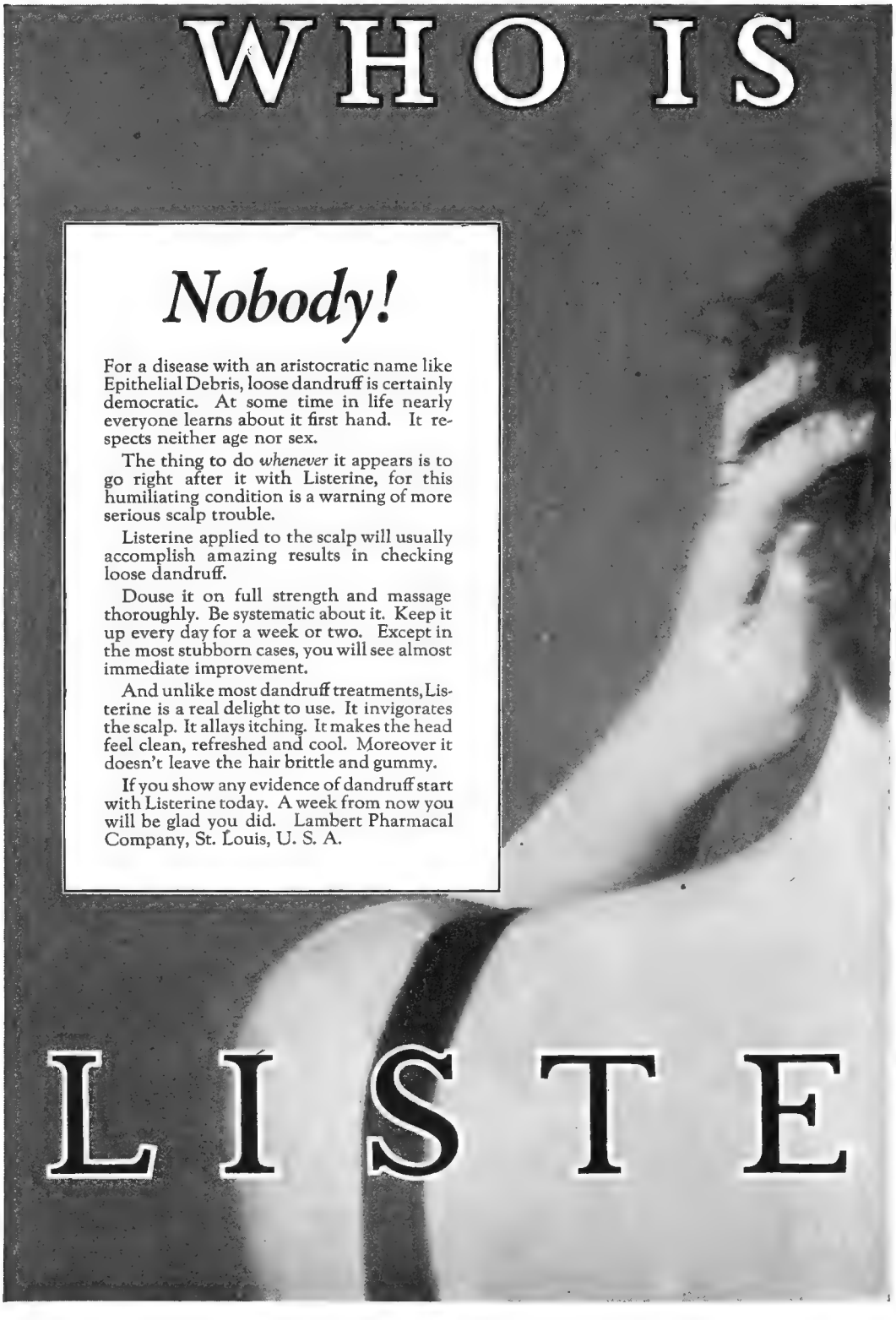
WHO IS
Nobody!
For a disease with an aristocratic name like Epithelial Debris, loose dandruff is certainly democratic. At some time in life nearly everyone learns about it first hand. It respects neither age nor sex.
The thing to do *whenever* it appears is to go right after it with Listerine, for this humiliating condition is a warning of more serious scalp trouble.
Listerine applied to the scalp will usually accomplish amazing results in checking loose dandruff.
Douse it on full strength and massage thoroughly. Be systematic about it. Keep it up every day for a week or two. Except in the most stubborn cases, you will see almost immediate improvement.
And unlike most dandruff treatments, Listerine is a real delight to use. It invigorates the scalp. It allays itching. It makes the head feel clean, refreshed and cool. Moreover it doesn't leave the hair brittle and gummy.
If you show any evidence of dandruff start with Listerine today. A week from now you will be glad you did. Lambert Pharmacal Company, St. Louis, U. S. A.
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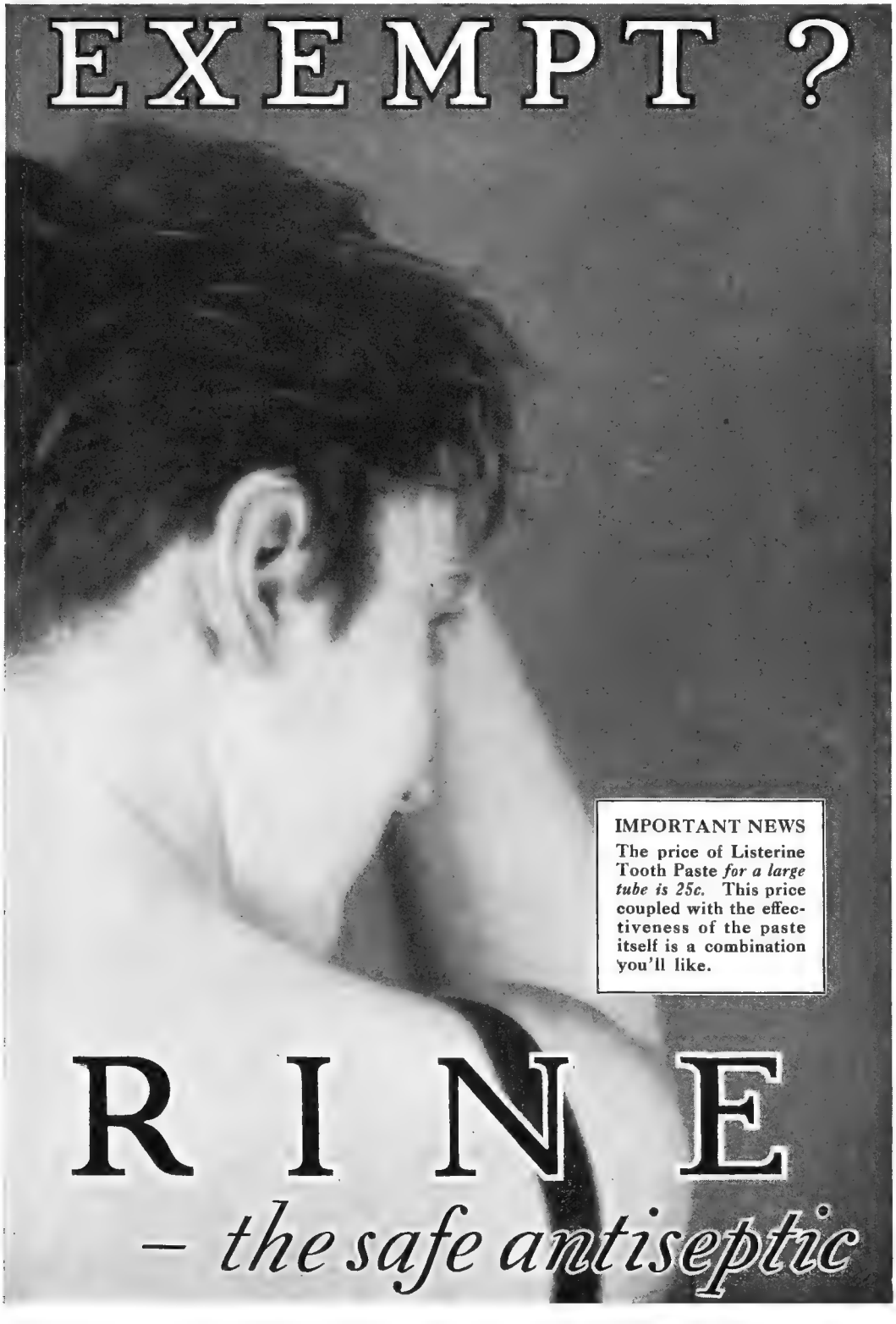
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IMPORTANT NEWS
The price of Listerine Tooth Paste *for a large tube is 25c.* This price coupled with the effectiveness of the paste itself is a combination you'll like.
RINE
— the safe antiseptic

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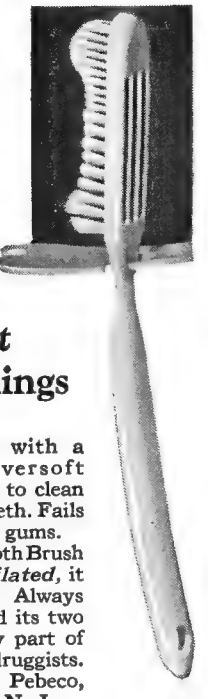

a brush that does two things

BRUSHING with a damp, oversoft tooth brush fails to clean *between* your teeth. Fails to stimulate your gums.

The Pebeco Tooth Brush does both. *Ventilated,* it dries overnight. Always firm, "live." And its two tufts reach every part of your teeth. All druggists. Made only by Pebeco, Inc., Bloomfield, N. J.

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depends on thorough but gentle skin cleansing. The safe soap to use is
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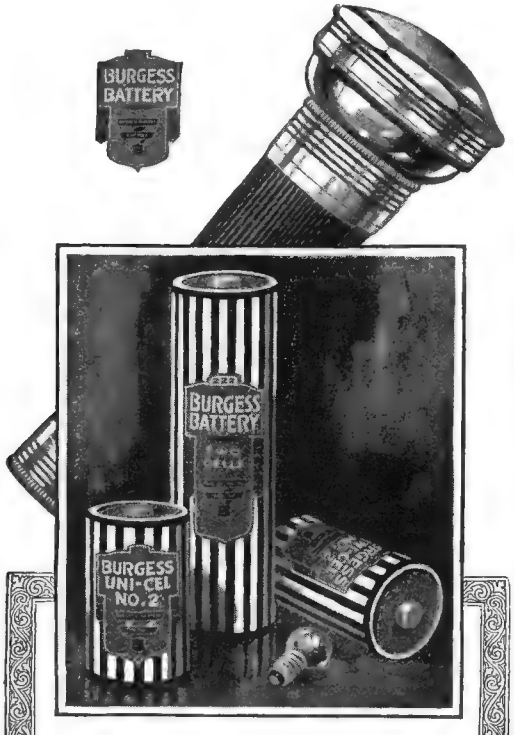

Why Buy a Burgess Flashlight?

WHY buy fire, life, theft or automobile insurance? Or, why lock your doors?

Simply to guarantee that in emergencies you will receive definite assistance and protection in one form or another which will overcome the immediate danger and possible loss.

Burgess Flashlights have for many years been a convenient and positive guarantee that will guard, guide and aid you against the dangers and inconvenience of darkness.

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A *Laboratory Product*

BURGESS BATTERY COMPANY

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BURGESS FLASHLIGHTS & BATTERIES

"He Used to Belong to Our Crowd"

"He's the only one of the old gang who made good"

"THAT's Bob Thompson, sales manager for Fink & Snyder. They say he makes $15,000 a year.

"Yet it hasn't been long since he wasn't making more than $35 a week. I know, because he used to belong to our crowd. There were six of us and there was hardly a night that we didn't bowl or shoot pool or play cards together.

"Lots of times we would sit down and talk about earning more money, but that's all it ever amounted to—*talk!* Bob was the only one who really did anything.

"'I'm through wasting my spare time like this,' he said one night. 'I'm going to take up a course with the International Correspondence Schools and try to make something of myself before it is too late.'

"We didn't see much of Bob after that—he'd always laugh and say he was 'too busy' when we'd ask him to join a party.

"Look at him now. A big man in a big job. Making five times as much as I'll ever make. Oh, what a fool I was not to send in that I. C. S. coupon when he did!"

How much longer are **you** going to wait before taking the step that you know will bring you advancement and more money? Aren't you tired working for a small salary?

It takes only a moment to mark and mail this salary-raising coupon and find out what the International Correspondence Schools can do for you. Surely it is better to send it in today than to wait a year or two years and then realize how much the delay has cost you. "Do it now!"

Mail the Coupon for Free Booklet

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
Box 2041-E, Scranton, Penna.

Without cost or obligation, please send me a copy of your booklet, **"Who Wins and Why,"** and full particulars about the course *before* which I have marked X in the list below:

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☐ Gas Engine Operating	☐ Chemistry ☐ Pharmacy
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Street Address.....

City..... State.....

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Persons residing in Canada should send this coupon to the International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Limited, Montreal, Canada

Genuine

BAYER ASPIRIN

SAY "BAYER ASPIRIN" and INSIST!

Unless you see the "Bayer Cross" on tablets you are not getting the genuine Bayer Aspirin proved safe by millions and prescribed by physicians for 25 years.

DOES NOT AFFECT THE HEART

Safe — Accept only "Bayer" package which contains proven directions.

Handy "Bayer" boxes of 12 tablets
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SEA ARTS GUILD
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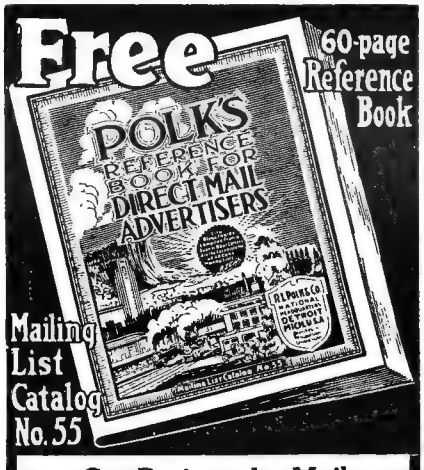

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Stow the duffle amidships as your partner takes his place in the bow. Now ease the "Old Town" onto the lake and hop aboard. Stroke the water gently with your paddle—deep easy strokes. Soon, perhaps, you'll find yourself whistling softly to the rhythm of your swing.

"Old Town Canoes" glide forward at the slightest dip of the blade. Strong and sturdy too. Priced $58 up. From dealer or factory.

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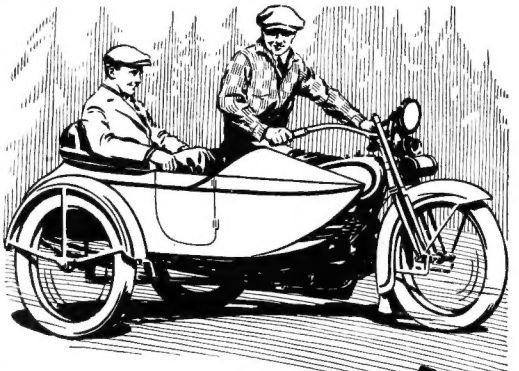

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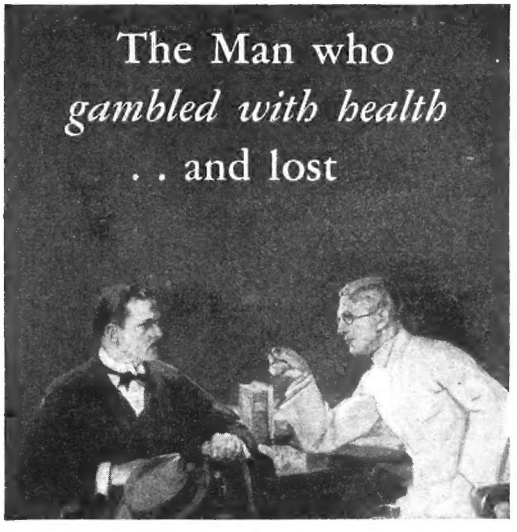

Your dentist knows the reason

Too many men and women gamble with the cards stacked against them. Neglect wins and they pay their losses in priceless health.

Don't leave health to chance. Take preventive measures to protect it against such grim Pyorrhea—the sinister enemy that takes high toll in health from 4 out of 5 after 40 and from thousands younger.

Play Safe

See that your dentist gives your teeth and gums a thorough examination at least twice a year. And start using Forhan's for the Gums, today.

Unlike ordinary tooth pastes, this dentifrice is sound health insurance. It contains Forhan's Pyorrhea Liquid, used by dentists everywhere.

If used regularly and in time, it wards off Pyorrhea or checks its course. Also, it firms gums, keeps teeth a lustrous white and protects them against decay.

Start using Forhan's now. Teach your children to use it. They'll love its flavor. At all druggists, 35c and 60c.

Formula of R. J. Forhan, D. D. S.
Forhan Company, New York

Forhan's *for the gums*

More Than a Tooth Paste . . . . It Checks Pyorrhea

You can be sure of this

Thousands are keeping their breath sweet and fresh this new way. We promise that you'll never go back to ordinary mouthwashes that only conceal unpleasant breath with embarrassing odors of their own after you have used this new Forhan's Antiseptic Refreshant. Try it.

I STOP Foot Pains or you pay nothing

Burning, aching feet and legs — cramps in toes, foot calluses, pains in the toes, instep, ball or heel—dull ache in the ankle, calf or knee—shooting pains, flattening and spreading of the feet, sagging arches — all can now be quickly ended.

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No stiff props to further weaken the foot. This is a strong, super-elastic yet amazingly thin, light band. It's called the Jung Arch Brace and acts through correct tension and scientific design to strengthen muscles naturally. Soon you do without it—feet are well.

Test it 10 days. If not amazed and delighted your money returned. Go to druggist, shoe store or chiropodist. If they can't supply you use coupon below and pay postman. **Send for free book on foot and leg troubles.**

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Jung Arch Brace Co., 344 Jung Bldg., Cincinnati, O.
Send 1 pair ☐ Wonder Style, $1 and postage. ☐ Miracle Style (extra wide for severe cases), $1.50 and postage. ☐ Send free book.

Shoe size.....Last.....
Name .....
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Canada: Kirkham & Roberts, Pacific Bldg., Toronto.
Can. prices: Wonder, $1.25; Miracle, $1.75. Cash. No C.O.D.

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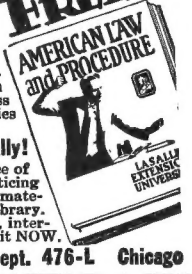

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Beauty—the Reward of Health

To Men

Women instinctively react to those masculine qualities that always mark a "man's man." For strength and power command a woman's respect in spite of herself. The facts of nature are imperious and sweep aside artificial things.

To Women

Men naturally are attracted to the beauty and charm that mark radiant health. For real beauty is far beyond mere prettiness, and its power over men is absolute. And it is within the grasp of any woman.

LET us face facts squarely: there is no one single cause of poor health so widespread as inactive elimination. That is why active intestinal function aided by Feen-a-mint is so important. It keeps the system free of waste and impurities and frees the blood for its important work of building up the body.

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Get a box of these inexpensive, refreshing mint-flavored gum tablets and chew one of them whenever you think advisable.